A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.26 MARCH 1986
95p

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

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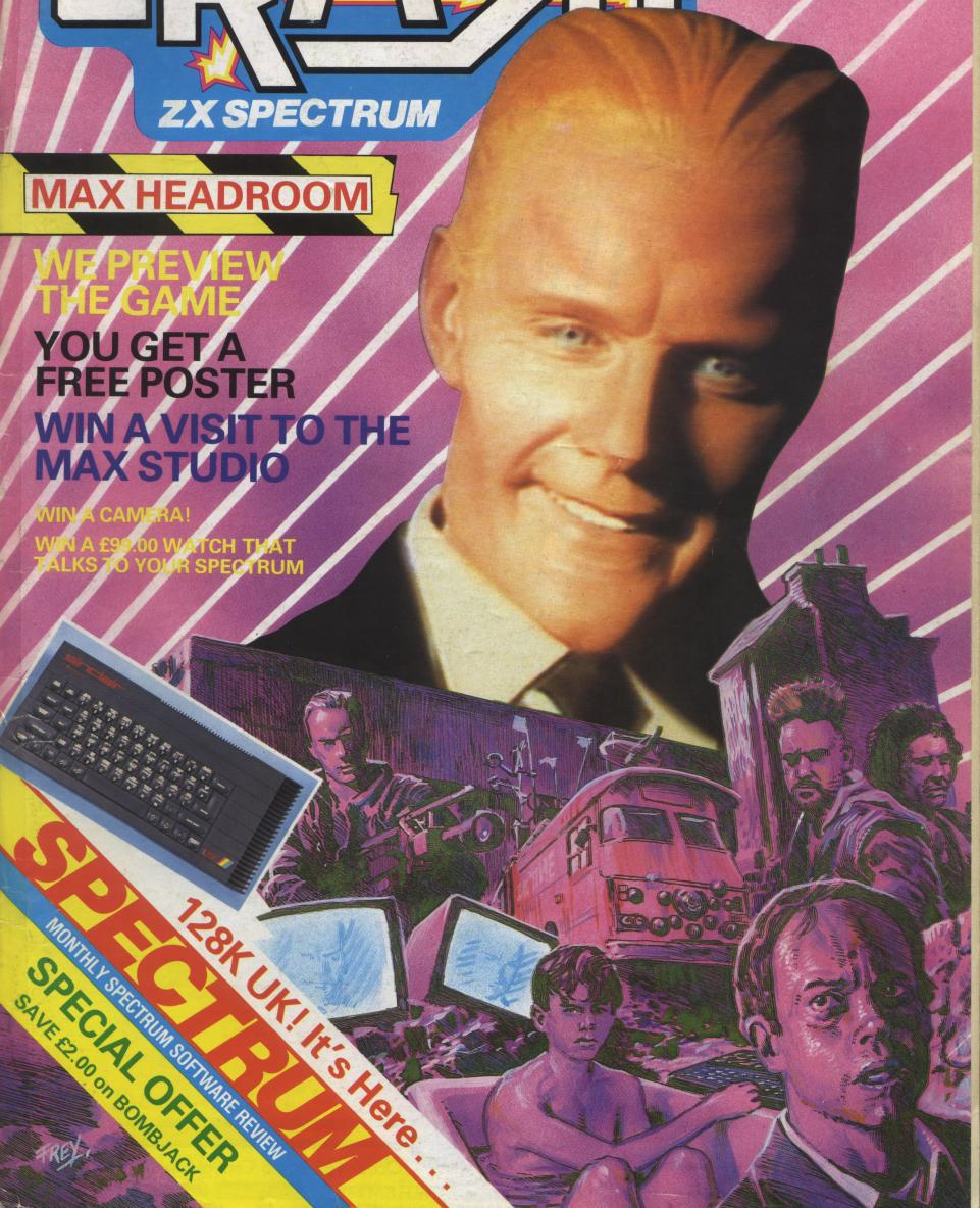
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ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No. 26 March 1986

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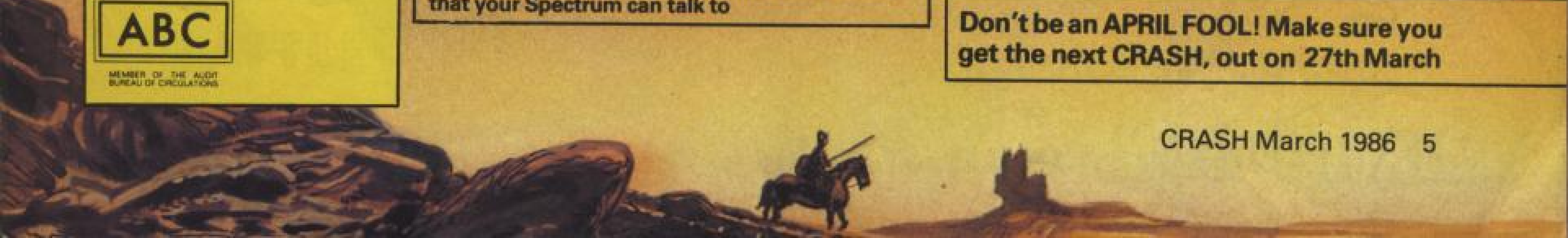
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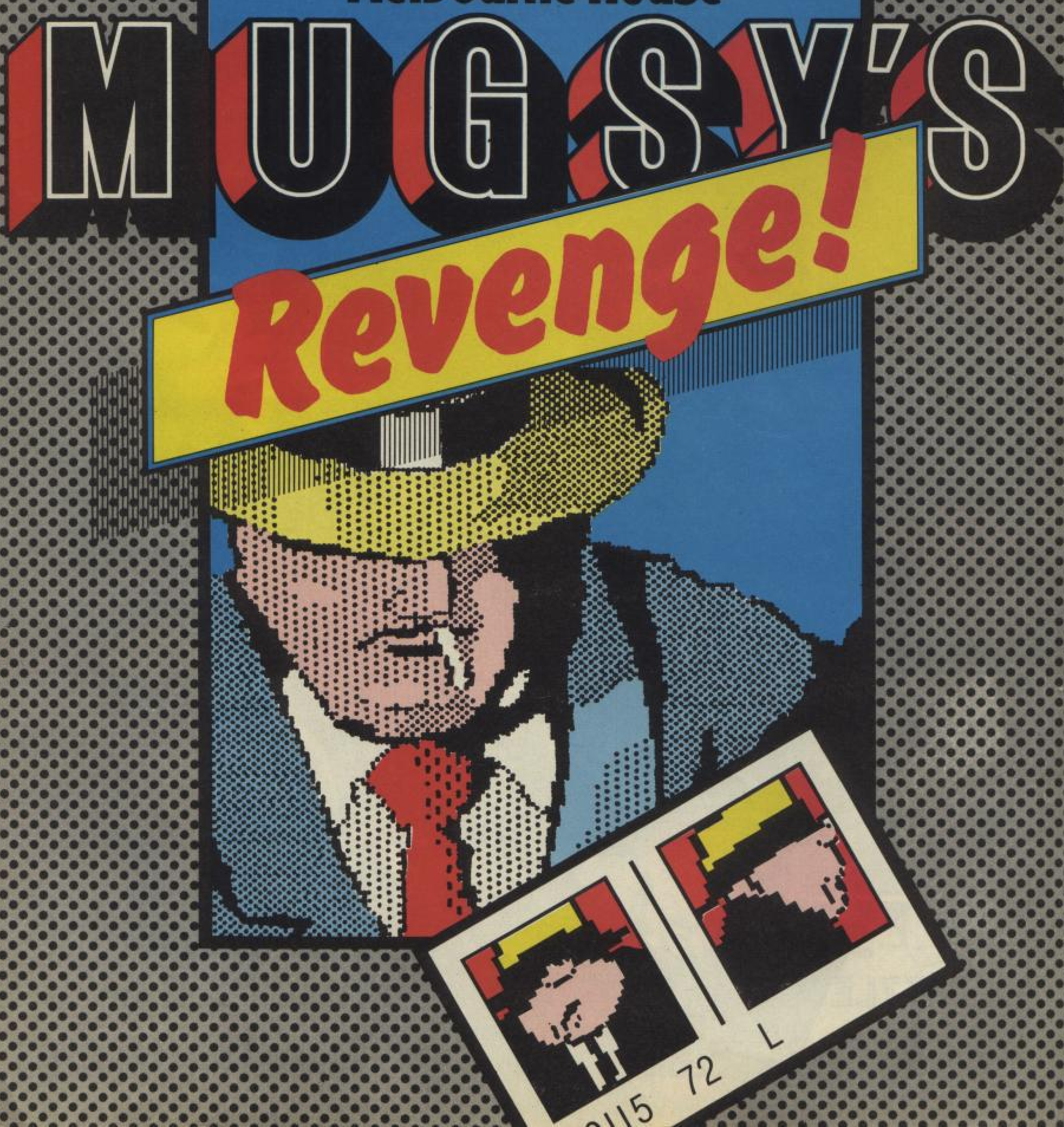
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Screen shots from Commodore 64 version.

Melbourne House



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

The 128K Spectrum has finally arrive. In two days time CRASH will be going to the official launch, to learn all the intimate details, including the final price announcement. There's not much more to say here about the new machine — it's arrival has not been so much an If?, or a What? but more of a When? February 13th, fortunately not a Friday . . .



WELL AIRED ALREADY



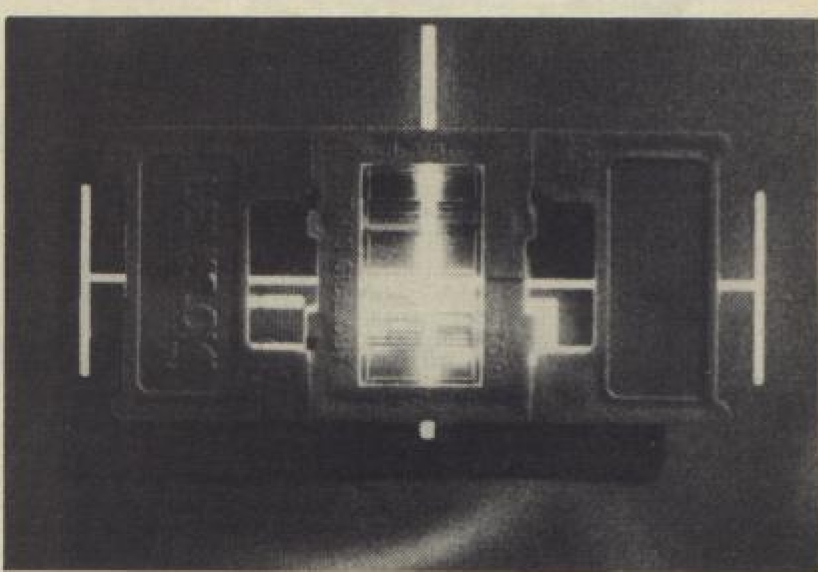
A BIG THANK YOU!

The response to the advertisement on these pages in the last issue is going to be disappointing — not that we didn't receive many replies, quite the opposite. The trouble is we were deluged with applicants. It's going to be a hard task to sort through them all, and it'll take quite a while to reply to everyone who applied for the job. There's only one job going at the moment, and a lot of people aren't going to make the interview stage . . . sorry, the teakitty can't stand the strain of paying expenses to everyone who applied.

If you sent in an application, you'll probably get to read these pages before our letter to you arrives, so here's a THANK YOU to be going on with. Please don't be too disappointed if our letter doesn't bring good news when it arrives — we'll be keeping all your applications on file and considering you automatically for any future vacancies that might arise within the hallowed portals of CRASH Towers.

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

LOKed OUT?



Lloyd's postbag has been brimming with letters on the subject of **Lenslok** over the last couple of weeks. Lenslok is a nifty device which could boost the life of programs it protects and thus prove a boon to the industry. Only three programs in the UK have been Lensloked so far, and the system has met with a mixed reaction from the consumer.

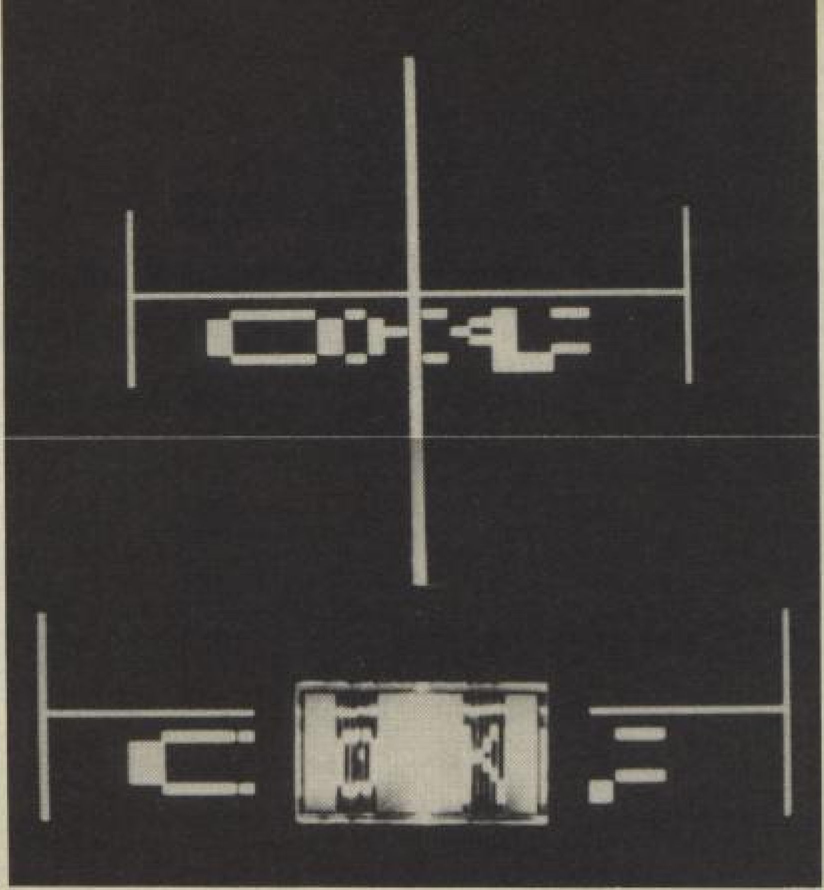
Lenslok has got off to a rather unfortunate start. Lenslok was effectively launched on a prestige product: Firebird's *Elite*. It has suffered from not one, but two mishaps. First off, either the code used to set up the Lenslok display was incorrectly written — or at the very least, the first set of instructions that came with *Elite* didn't describe the set

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD CRASH

up procedure accurately. People were unfamiliar with the new device, and quickly became frustrated. Cue a lot of aggravated Lenslok users.

Cockup Number Two arose when the wrong lens was shipped with some copies of *Elite* — fortunately for all concerned, only five hundred copies of the game were involved. Given the fact that each lens is a unique key, designed to work with a specific scrambling routine, this is rather like a hotel checking a guest in and issuing the wrong key. Except the guest finds out about the mistake pretty quickly, and returns to reception, rather than spending hours on hands and knees trying to get the key to fit, throwing a wobbly about locks and then either staying somewhere else or posting the key back to the hotel manager with a letter of complaint.



We've just used Lenslok on a copy of *Elite* to get the photos on this page — the *Elite* we borrowed from Mail Order had the right lens, but on our monitor the initial sizing display had to be set considerably wider than the lensholder for the characters to be unscrambled. The amended instructions in the package refer to a 5mm gap between the outer lines of the on-screen rules and the ends of the lens holder.

It would be a great shame if the bad feeling generated around Lenslok resulted in the idea being rejected by the legitimate software buyer — it's the best anti-piracy device that the home computer market has seen so far. To be fair, quite a few *Elite* owners have written to Lloyd, saying they can't understand what all the fuss is about, and **Digital Integration**, who installed Lenslok on *Tomahawk* report very few problems. But then they got the set-up code right and so far as they are aware *Tomahawk* has always been shipped with the right lens. According to the man at Digital Integration, apart from a few people who just couldn't get on with the Lenslok system, there have been very few complaints. It doesn't work very well with very tiny telly screens and polarising or anti-glare filters on the screen can throw the system out of line a bit — but those are minor problems.

The whole Lenslok system is still finding its feet. One software house installing Lenslok was sent an inaccurate specification of the lens they were about to use. Luckily after much hair pulling they became convinced there was a mistake and got a new specification which enabled them to make the best use of the lenses supplied before the software was mastered. Fortunate, because if the display software written to the original lens specification had not been modified to suit the lens actually produced, Lenslok would have made a lot more enemies.

Lenslok is a new product and there are bound to be teething problems. Hopefully they will soon be resolved — let's face it, painless Lensloking should be less aggravating than unloadable Turbo and Hyperloaders . . .


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It's just round the corner . . . Imminent UK launch. Great shakes! No, I've not lost the calculator keypad, no, it wasn't in the box in the first place. How much extra? Still, at the price . . . what was the price? One eightyish . . . Does that include the brand new manual supplement and the two free OCEAN games? What were they? . . . Sound chip . . . video output . . . serial interface . . . huge memory. Did you say credit cards? . . . oh, you mean access facility via memory bank switching . . . what WHAM disc? oh, *RAM* disk (shreik!). Colour supplement by Dorling who? . . . yes, very pretty, aesthetically pleasing, educative . . . but what about the hard facts? What do you mean baud rates have been made redundant? Please bring back those exceptional Japanese printer manuals. With the cheap Vero phone connectors, does this mean that you can connect up directly to the phone? No? That one is for the extra keypad and the other for the serial printer. He's got a parallel printer, . . . that's a shame . . . acts as a MIDI interface, well now you're talking. Pinouts? Pleeease . . . Logan, no not you Terry, Dr Ian Logan, where are you . . . Please HELP!!!

Spectrum the difference? Don't touch that heatsink. No, it doesn't get red hot. Show some respect for people's status symbol.

Checklist: No change to the keyboard, red hot Spectrum logo and new 128K printed at bottom right of keypad. Lots of connectors. Same old edge connector but with shorter tracks to prevent cross fertilization of tracks from switched on owners who jog their peripherals after power-up. 8-pin DIN plug for monitor connections. Surprise, surprise, not only full complement RGB output with vertical and composite sync and bright output, but also composite PAL for modern TV sets with video input. Great! Sinclair's got the connections, you supply the cable.

EAR and MIC sockets now moved to the lefthand side. Close to them the serial printer port, no not the standard 25-way D connector, but the now increasingly popular Vero phone connector. Got a cable? And another one of those thingie connectors at the front of the corpus delectus, this one to link up the £19.95 worth of coiled Calculator pad wonders for mathematical genius trainees . . .

Under the skin there is real evidence of the many splendoured things the 128K is endowed with: the sound chip; a great whopping 32K x 8 ROM; new modulator chip and sixteen 64-Kbit memory chips for the magical 128K memory number. All neat and tidy, no botch-up in sight, and this with only an Issue 6K board. Switch on and the new 128K world is revealed. A five option menu box presents itself. Using a blue bar selection cursor and the up and down cursor keys you can choose between TAPE LOADER, 128 BASIC, CALCULATOR, 48 BASIC and TAPE TESTER.

TAPE LOADER is the default selection and enables you to load any 128K program from tape at high speed. 128 BASIC is what it's all about. It's the extended Spectrum BASIC with some new commands and a full screen editor. CALCULATOR turns your computer into an expensive desktop calculator, which can be controlled via keyboard or keypad. What this means is that you don't need to fumble with LPRINT statements to get results to show and that the current result is stored for further calculations similar to any pocket calculator. 48 BASIC destroys all chances of enjoying the upgraded 128K performance by returning you to the good old 1982 Sinclair Research logo. This is only to be used sparingly for the odd hundred 48K Spectrum games in your library and the odd hundred still to be released. Just to make sure you remain nostalgic, there is no way you can get back to the 128K future other than to reset the machine. TAPE TESTER checks that you've set the right volume level on your cassette player and should guarantee better loading statistics. Hmmm!

So what's new in 128K world? For a start, there is no one-key entry system anymore. Hurrah? Booo? Different opinions, different reactions. A definite advantage is the redundancy (voluntary, but of course) of the extended mode key, which lives in retirement and only occasionally provides access to special characters such as square brackets. BASIC programs may be entered in capital or lower case letters with or without spaces before or after BASIC keywords, yes, you can be sloppy. When the current program line is checked for syntax and is accepted, the BASIC keywords are automatically converted to capitals and spaces inserted where required.

The good news is the full screen editor for BASIC programs. You can hop around with the normal cursor keys anywhere you like and make corrections to the existing lines. This is always followed by a variety of different squawks and squeeks, depending on whether you have inadvertently pressed the wrong direction keys or the ENTER key, much to the detriment of musical BASIC programmers.

Pressing EDIT displays an option menu box with an assortment of special functions. 128 BASIC takes you back into the editor; RENUMBER (at long last) automatically alters the line numbers so that they start with 10 and increment by 10 changing at the same time any references to the line numbers which appear within the lines such as GOTO etc; SCREEN reduces the editing screen area down to the two usual editing lines, providing a lot of scope for scrolling with the cursor keys; PRINT lets you print out the current program onto paper and EXIT returns you to the main menu.

But where is the extra memory? BASIC treats the extra memory as a RAM disk. BASIC does not use the extra memory directly, but allows programs, screens or data files to be stored in the extra memory area similar to disk or cassette storage. All the commands for RAM disk storage are

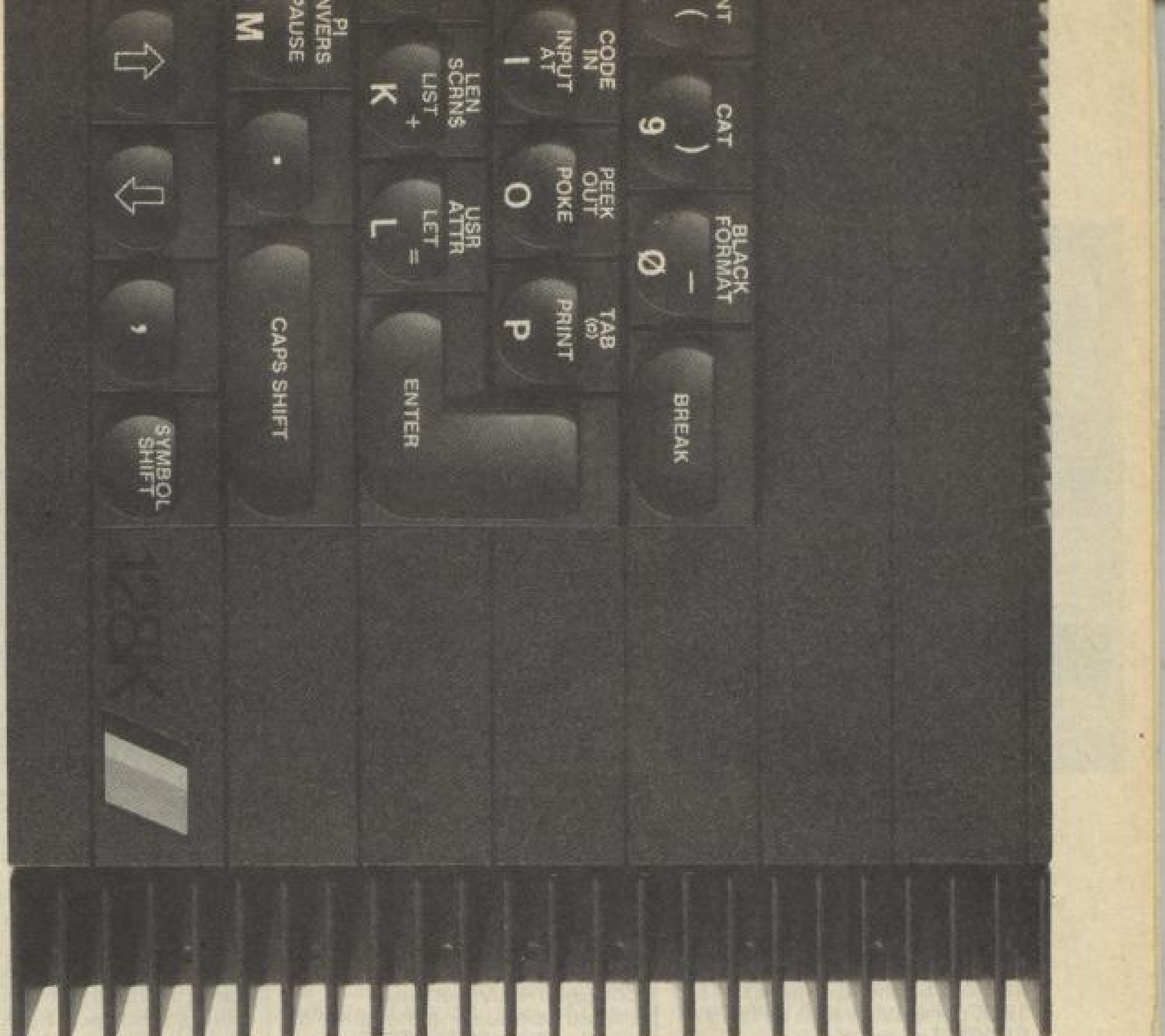
the same as cassette commands except that an exclamation mark (shreik!)must be typed after the keyword. These commands can be included in the program currently in the BASIC memory area, so that BASIC overlays can be merged during runtime thus creating larger than life programs. Funtions available are SAVE!, LOAD!, MERGE!, ERASE! and CAT! (to display an alphabetic catalogue of all the files on RAM disk). It is possible to carry over 128 programs into 48 BASIC by typing SPECTRUM and ENTER. However, any commands only available in 128 BASIC will not be accepted.

Sounds alright so far, doesn't it? Which leads to the delectable desert (as in food). Apart from the usual beepety beep made (in)famous by the old 48K, the 128K has an up to date synthesizer chip. Both sounds (beeps and all) have now been modulated onto the TV signal and can thus be amply heard through your regular TV box. Should you be lucky enough to be using a monitor by way of the video output, you will no doubt have the latest HIFI stack to amplify the signal coming out of the MIC socket. This opens up a whole new world to all who dearly love the Spectrum and have constantly been defending (or was it deafening) the poor mute thing against evil alien-ZAPPing monsters. Their voice be heard at last!

Programming the sound chip consists of creating sound strings, usually with LET statements, which include the notes and special sound commands. With the use of the PLAY command up to three strings simultaneously may be read and converted to sound. There are three tone channels and three noise channels, which can be turned on or off individually. This is done with the command M followed by a number indicating the correct orchestration. An instrument covers two octaves c-b and C-B, sharp notes prefixed with a hash and flat notes with a dollar sign.

You can change the octave range with the command O followed by a number between 0 to 8. There is a one octave overlap between each octave range. The length of each note can be set by prefixing it with a number from 1 to 12 from semiquaver to semi-breve including triplets, and the overall tempo is dictated with the T command followed by a beat per minute value of between 60 to 240. The volume of the individual notes is set using the V command followed by a number between 0 and 15. Special volume effects provide a variation of attack and decay sequencing under the control of the U command followed by a W command (8 different volume envelopes). Command X controls the timing of these effects. Last but not least there is a musical phrase repeat facility using brackets. Double closing brackets provide an infinite repeat until an H command in any of the musical strings is encountered.

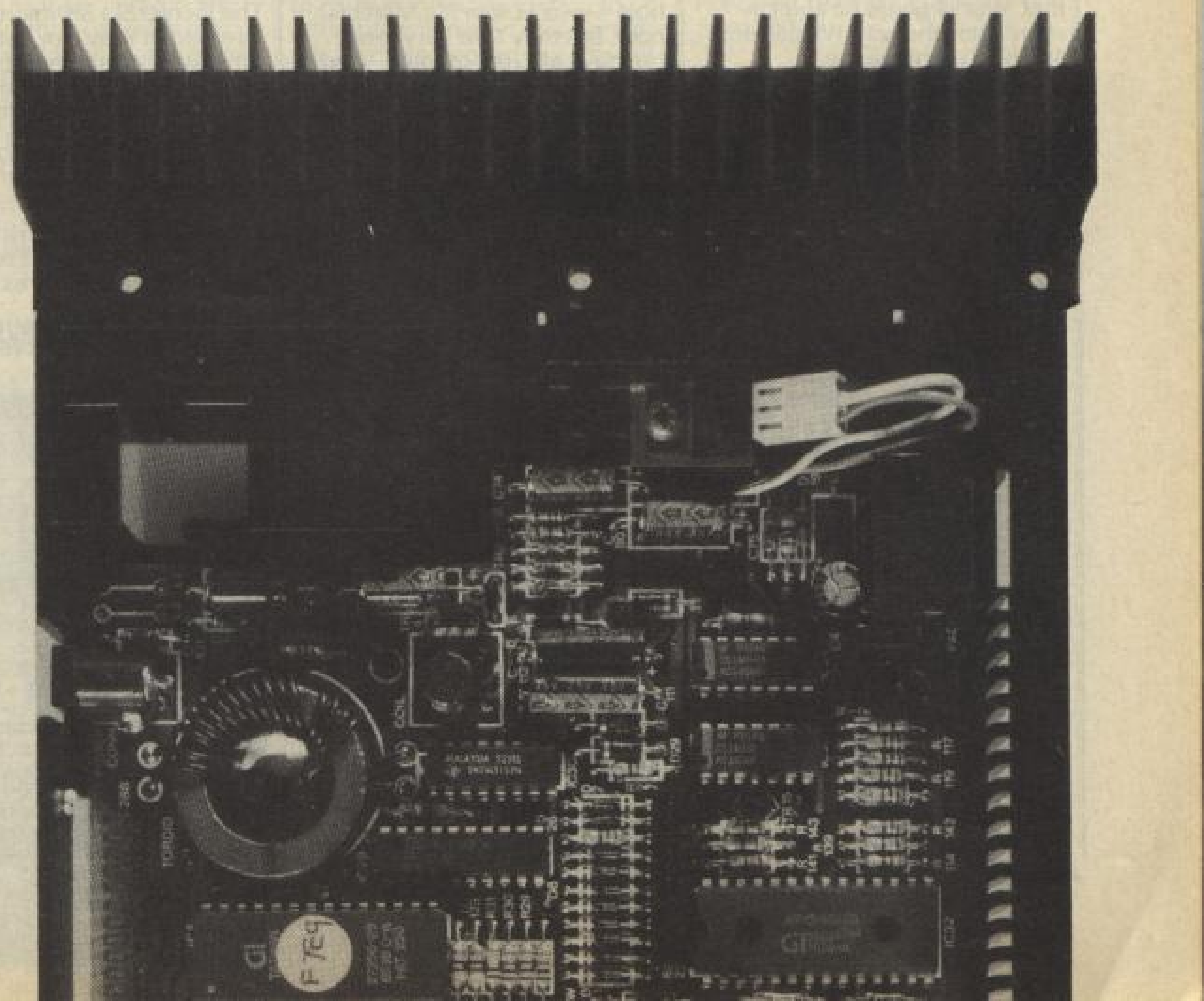
MIDI-compatible musical instruments may be connected to the serial port, so that music programmed on the Spectrum 128 can be played through a synthesizer, drum machine or whatever. To send the output to the MIDI interface, the musical string should include the letter Y followed by a channel number from 1 to 16. Using the same channel number in each string, up to eight notes can be played by one instrument at the same time. On the other hand, using different channels, up to eight instruments can be controlled. A prerequisite is of course a MIDI lead, which will be available from Sinclair Research. Sinclair encourage all do-it-yourselvers by providing nil pinouts for the MIDI cum RS232 connector. In fact they have done such a good job of it, that they have even forgotten to mention such things as baud rates and serial data format for the printer . . . ? I'm sure there is a logic there somewhere, but you can't find that either in the manual . . .



The Spectrum 128 is bound to be a successful newcomer. Despite the improvements and additions it still has retained a unique and traditional character — standing out rather like the Beetle does amidst a host of Japanese imported cars — with it's peculiar and outdated BASIC, real rubber-feel keyboard and lack of joystick interface and parallel printer port. Existing Spectrum owners may not find the heart to swop over, unless they can get a good deal for their current equipment. Newcomers, however, get a good deal, specifically as the 128 in 48K disguise has already a massive range of gripping software at it's cassette port . . .

Franco Frey

128



MERELY MANGRAM

MERELY M



No less that 76 software titles are listed in the giant fold-out leaflet that came with the 128K Spectrum Sinclair sent us for review — but we didn't receive any games for the new machine, not even the Two free US Gold games which were alluded to on the box. So the full impact of a 128K game has yet to be felt in CRASH Towers.

A lot of the games appear on the promotional leaflet as 128/48K games, and it's not clear whether they are remixes, dub versions or just the plain old 48K versions which will also, like any 48K program, run on the 128K machine — it opens up a whole new world, now software houses can be just like ZTT, releasing endless streams of varying mixes of Frankie Goes To Hollywood. **Gargoyle** have produced a new version of *Sweevo's World* for the 128K only — *Sweevo's Whirled* — which explains why Greg Follis was mysteriously reminding Robin Candy before Christmas that 'World' could be spelt in more than one way. (Which only served to confuse the carnivorous Candy even more — he was to be seen wandering round the building muttering the word over and over again. Spelling was never his strong point — it's sums he's good at, especially when they involve money, his salary.)

Fairlight 2 — The Trail of Darkness also appears on the leaflet as a 128 only game as does *Ball Blazer* from Activision. Hopefully 48K versions of these games will also appear for us lesser mortals, but it's all a bit worrying!

Activision seem to be very busy at the moment, converting some of their games for the Spectrum. According to Activision's **Andrew (he who is never wrong) Wright** *Rescue on Fractalus* is apparently imminent. A game that went down very well on the Commodore, it sets you on a rescue mission over the surface of a planet with a landscape produced using fractal maths (must ask Robin what them are — he can do my fractal maths and I'll do his speeling and grummar). You have to zoom around a mountainous landscape, dodging fire from laser cannon emplacements looking for stranded pilots. When you find one, land and let him into your craft — but remember what mummy and daddy told you about giving lifts to strange men — make sure he's not an alien imposter or your mission comes to a premature conclusion.

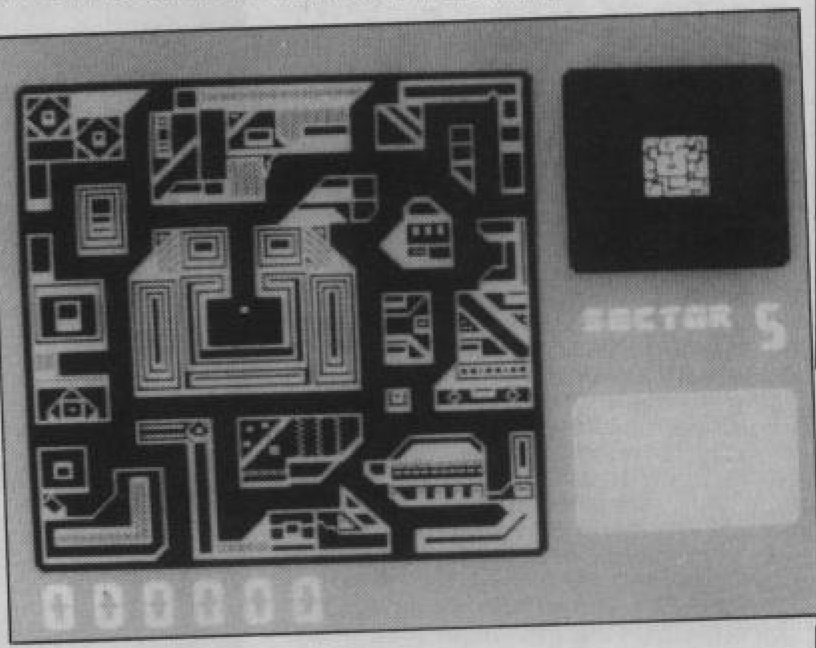
Eidolon, in which you explore the caverns of someone's mind should also be arriving on the Spectrum soon. Here you chase through a warren, searching for weird and wonderful nasties and eliminating them before they eliminate you. *Ball Blazer*, another Lucasfilm game, is currently being viewed by a Lucasfilm representative for the final Okay, and 128K willing, should be on the streets in a 48K incarnation by the time you read this.

Electric Dreams — the Rod Cousens/Activision label — should be releasing the game of the film *Back To The Future*, and although we were promised screen shots and a run down of the plot in time for inclusion in this issue, nothing has materialised yet. So there's not a lot I can say about the gameplay, as the film hasn't reached the Ludlow Empire as yet . . . *Spindizzy* is the other Spectrum title Electric Dreams have in the pipeline according to Candy, and if you have faith in his oneiric (LMLWD) abilities, the game should bear some resemblance to the arcade machine Marble Madness.

The team down at **CRL** have been busy over the Christmas hols — yes I know it's Marchish now, but they take very long holidays at CRL I'm told — and have launched a whole new label: **Nu Wave**. The first title to wash into the office on its crest is *Id*, a strange computer entertainment devised by **Mel Croucher** of *Deus Ex Machina* fame amongst other things. Mel was aided and abetted by **Colin Jones** in the production of *Id* and the game, if game you wish to call it, centres on the fact that you load an ephemeral personality into your computer. Id is a personality with which you have to communicate — it's personality has been shattered and you need to build up trust and gradually discover what Id has been in the past. Fascinating — there might be a review somewhere else in this issue, but at the time of writing . . . . Nu Wave has been set up to bring you slightly off-beat programs, away from the games and adventure mainstream. I hear their next release will be for the Commodore and is to be an adventure without graphics. And without text: you have to work entirely in sound! Hmmm.

On the more orthodox front,

On the tail of replidroids in CRL's BLADERUNNER



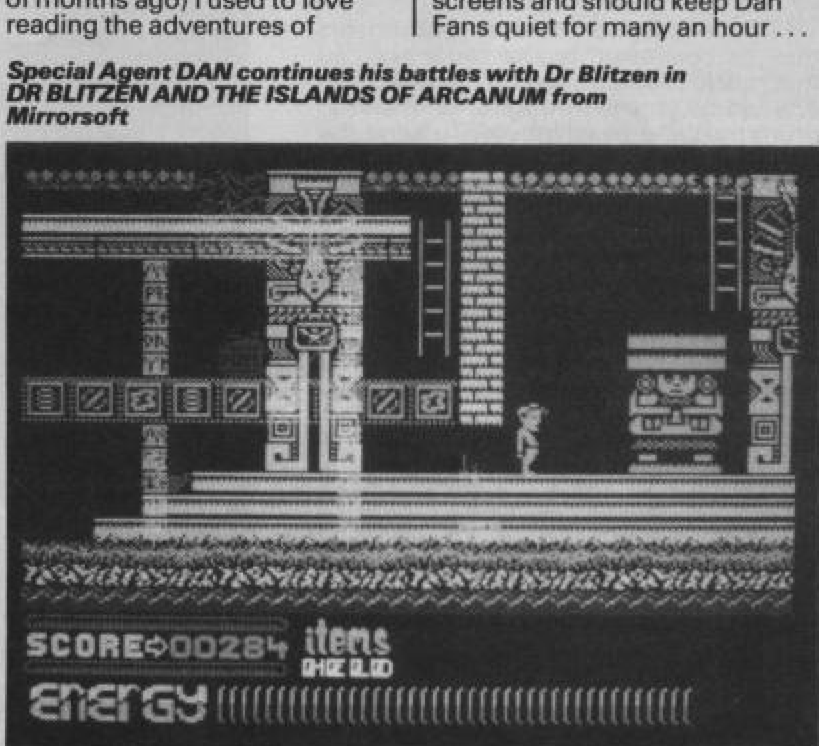
CRL managed to get a copy of *Blade Runner* to us just in time to miss all the deadlines, so an April review will follow. The game is 'inspired by the Van Gelis soundtrack' from the film of the same name because no one knows who owns the copyright to the actual film any more. Set in crowded and dirty scrolling streets, it sets you firmly in the future as a bounty hunter on the trail of replidroids, who in their turn are on the trail of their creator.

Mastertronic are beavering away merrily and should be pushing some first rate budget games onto the Spectrum market during the coming weeks, not least of which is *Knight Tyme*, the follow on to *Spellbound*. Enough of that one, as there's a full preview lurking around page 104 of this issue. The Incredible Shrinking Fireman, if they can find him in time, will be gracing Spectrums soon, as will conversions of *Devil's Crown* and *Space Hunter*. All of these are originals which will also appear on other machines later.

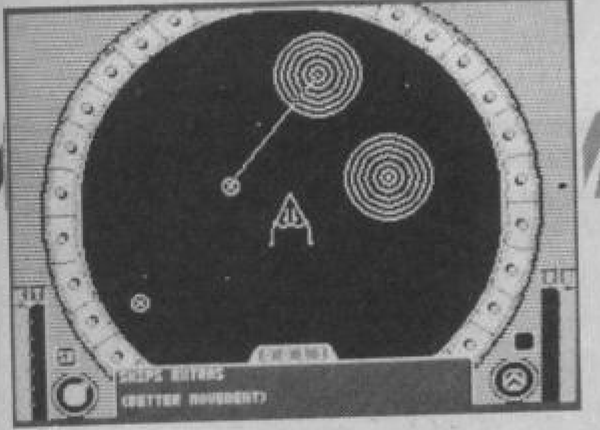
As a weeny kid (a mere handful of months ago) I used to love reading the adventures of Biggles, Captain WE Johns' air ace hero. Biggles was one of those wonders who never grew any older between the First and Second World Wars, and was still the same during the 50s and 60s when he appeared on telly. **Mirrorsoft** are ensuring his update when in mid-May, they will take me right back to the halcyon (LMLWD) days of my teen years they release *Biggles* for the Spectrum.

Work on *Dynamite Dan II* is well underway, and the finished game should appear under the title *Dr Blitzen and the Islands of Arcanum*. Dr Blitzen has made a comeback and is mesmerising the youth of the world by adding subliminal, mind destroying sound waves to pop records. Holed up in a secret hideout spread over the eight uncharted islands of Arcanum, Dr B must be stopped. Agent Dan has to locate a record on each of the islands and play it on the hidden jukebox. Apart from the gun-toting mad Doctor, a swarm of kleptomaniac aliens are up against you on your quest, who do all they can to relieve you of useful goods you have collected. The playing area is set to span at least two hundred screens and should keep Dan Fans quiet for many an hour . . .

Special Agent DAN continues his battles with Dr Blitzen in DR BLITZEN AND THE ISLANDS OF ARCANUM from Mirrorsoft

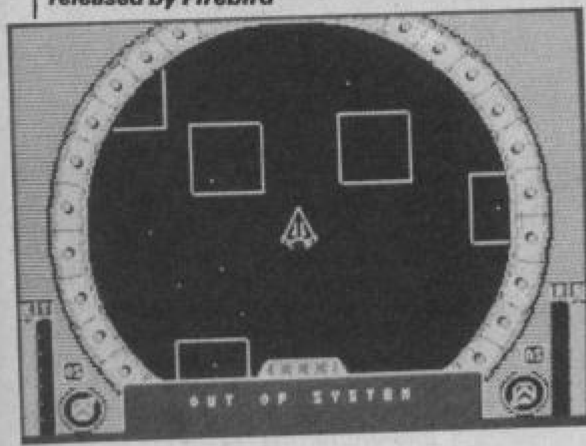


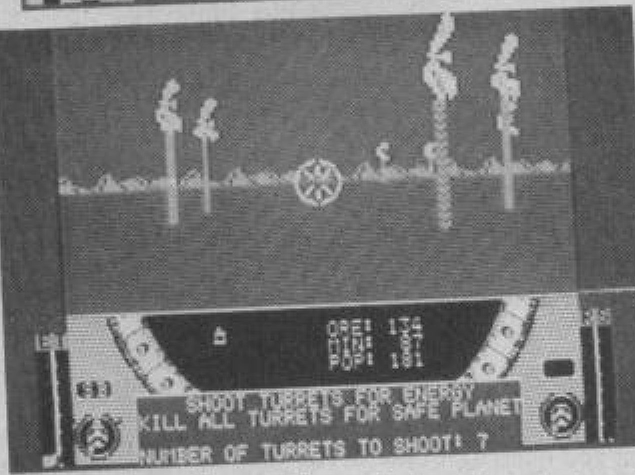
M NGRAM





The view from your Art Deco spaceship cockpit as you zoom round in space. EMPIRE, soon to be released by Firebird





On the surface of one of the myriad worlds to be found in Firbird's EMPIRE. If it's anything like Firebird, the Empire will grow. . . .

News of **Ultimate's imminent release,** *Cyberun* arrives in the form of the inlay — but no cassette. The usual impenetrable instructions don't

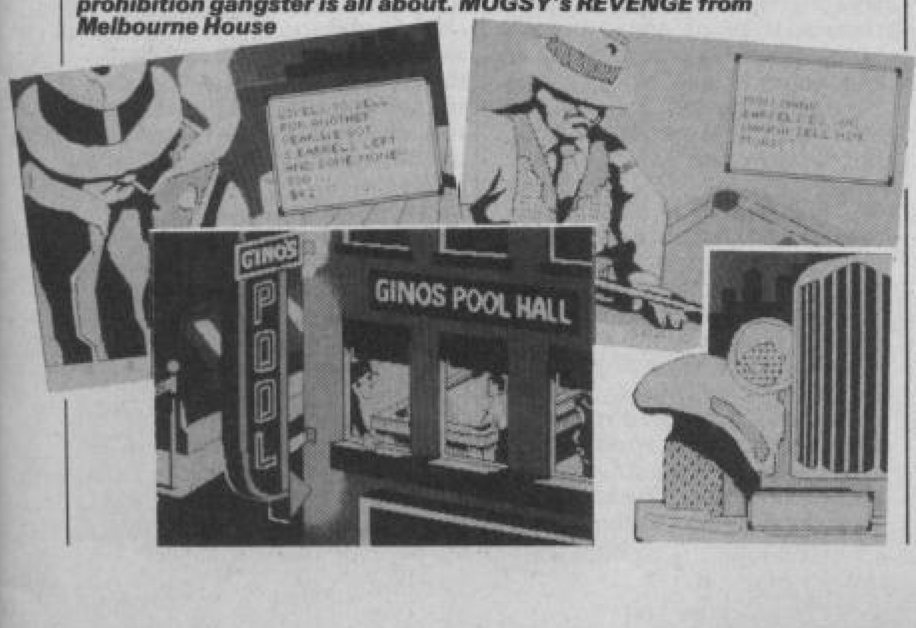
All we've got so far . . . the inlay from CYBERUN



give me too much of a clue as to what will be going on once the game's been loaded — apart from the fact that it looks like a shoot em up/adventure of a very different complexion. A disclaimer mentions that, 'due to the enormous complexity of the interactive CYBERUN GAS adventure software it is almost impossible to guarantee continuous error free operation', which could bode for a very interesting game indeed as you cross galaxies en route for the Beta Gamma System and untold wealth. This system is the source of Cybernite crystals, the hardest and most valuable substance in the known universe. A massive ship, able to cope with strange magnetronic forces in the Beta Gamma system has been constructed in modules and shipped there. It seems you will control the command module, which has to be piloted across hostile galaxies in a race through space to get to the components of the Cybernite carrying ship that await your arrival.

February 13th is the day that **Melbourne House** have set aside for the launch of the successor to *Mugsy*. Mugsy has paid his debt to society, and, released from jail, has found a whole new way of making money. Running illicit booze. No doubt a game which will appeal enormously to Candy's mercenary instincts, as you have to co-ordinate the whole operation. No firm news as yet as to the state of play on *Rock and Wrestle*, which was delayed by illness.

Sleazy pool halls, stogies and flash motors is what being a prohibition gangster is all about. MUGSY's REVENGE from Melbourne House



Colin, who is sort of Chief Gopher for **Firebird** sproinged into the office a few weeks ago while I was at home, and after (reportedly) atacking most of the staff under the influence of Tizer the Surpriser, offered an advance copy of a new space game from the programming pen of **Andrew Glaister**. It's likely to see the light of day under the title of *Empire*, and from what I've been shown it promises to do well. Set in the days when space travel has just become a reality, it has a Flash Gordon graphical feel. You zoom round in a ship, landing on planets, picking up supplies and delivering them to space stations and undertaking a variety of missions as you receive orders. The game contains some 64 separate universes, each of which is 256 by 256 screens big and there are thirty two missions for you to attempt, which start at different stages of gameplay. Not a trivial game, by all accounts.

Continuing in the space theme, *Halley's Comet* (or Horley's if you prefer) is another impending Firebird release, due out mid-Marchish as part of the £7.95 Hot Range, also programmed by Andy Glaister. It's a three-phase game (nothing to do with electricity) in which you are on a mission to the comet. In accordance with Hoyle's theory, the comet is over-run with germs, and in the final phase of the game you are involved in a fair bit of germ-bashing to make space a healthier place. In Phase I you do little more that watch you ship taking off, taking on the role of the shipboard computer during Phase II. During the journey it's vital to make sure that you don't pass too close to other planets, as they launch attack ships which have to be fought off. Communications and life support systems have to be maintained and an argument with a bad tempered shipboard computer system needs to be won. Also the coffee machine has to be kept in good order! Coffee levels affect the pilot's concentration in the germ-bashing section, so a good supply of caffeinated drinkies helps success.

Anyone mystified by the message 'Who is Sam Cruise?' that pops up on the blackboard in *Back to Skool* can now be put out of their mystery; *Sam Cruise* is the name of **Microshpere**'s next game, due for launch before Easter. You play Sam in a detective story set in an American town in the early 1940s. The playing area will be much bigger than in either Skool games, and you'll be able to enter buldings and peer through windows. It'll cost £6.95.

Peering into things can sometimes be quite hard. An impenetrable wall of silence seems to surround *Dr Who from* **Micropower**, despite several telephone calls and the rather strange sheep's brain advertisement they've had in the computer press for a couple of months. And although we've got a coat belonging to John Marshall of **Orpheus**, we can't persuade them to send even a single *Young One* to have a look at. Maybe it's time to call for the Ludlow Mafia, and start posting buttons.

Swords and Sorcery fans will be pleased to know that the second module is well underway — more news of that next issue after the guys from **PSS** have visited Ludlow to reveal their hidden secrets and plan for world domination, or whatever. Wargamers, or the just plain warlike, will no doubt look forward to the Spectrum version of *Falklands 82*, arriving on 10th February 1986 at £7.95, also from PSS.

Global Software announce the release of a compilation *The Fourmost Adventures*, set to appear on 27th February. Our old friend *Out of the Shadows* from **Mizar** heads the cast list, aided and abetted by a new game from **Fergus McNeil** of *Bored of the Rings* fame, *Galaxias*, and including *The Mural*, a game by newcomer **Nic Ford** and *The Micro Man* which has already passed under Derek's scrutiny. At £7.95 it should prove an attractive proposition.

Irish software house, **New Concepts** are already working on a follow up to *Surfchamp* which will allow you to take your Spectrum out on the piste with the aid of a couple of plastic skis and will no doubt be shipping the Editor and a host of hacks to some snowy slope in the not too distant future to mark the launch. Get your face cream out John Minson.

Which just about wraps up this month's frantic look forward. . . .

N.O.M.A.D.



N.O.M.A.D. fights its way through the slums. The wheel doobrie spits out missiles as it revolves. Shoot it before it shoots you!

Producer: Ocean
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Ian Weatherburn, Roy Gibson, Simon Butler**

It is a time of crisis, a few centuries in the future. Talos, a giant man-made asteroid spins slowly through space, spreading evil in its wake, crushing any opposition and generally creating havoc. At its helm sits one man, the really horrible, nasty Mega-criminal, Cyrus T Gross — a man so dastardly that not even the Galactic Law Enforcement Agency can bring him to justice.

In desperation, the rulers of the few remaining worlds that are still Free bought a contract with the Nemesis Organisation, a tough bunch of humanoid and robotic mercenaries. Can Nemesis rid the cosmos of Mr Gross? A plan is drawn up — a solo space commando is sent to penetrate Gross's heavily armed homeworld and destroy him. You control a N.O.M.A.D. 471 (Nemesis Organisation Mobile Attack Droid) assigned to the mission.

Entering the immense city complex on the asteroid where Gross has made his home, you find yourself in a strange environment, with weird machines and mysterious contraptions filling a maze of passageways.

The game is played from a plan view, which gives no feeling of depth — in this respect, it's rather like *Sabre Wulf*. The route to Gross's lair is a very twisty and dangerous one. Your journey is made even more hazardous by the flick screen display employed in the game — you can never see what is coming next as you move off one screen. Four levels of the heavily defended city have to be negotiated before N.O.M.A.D. gets close to Gross.

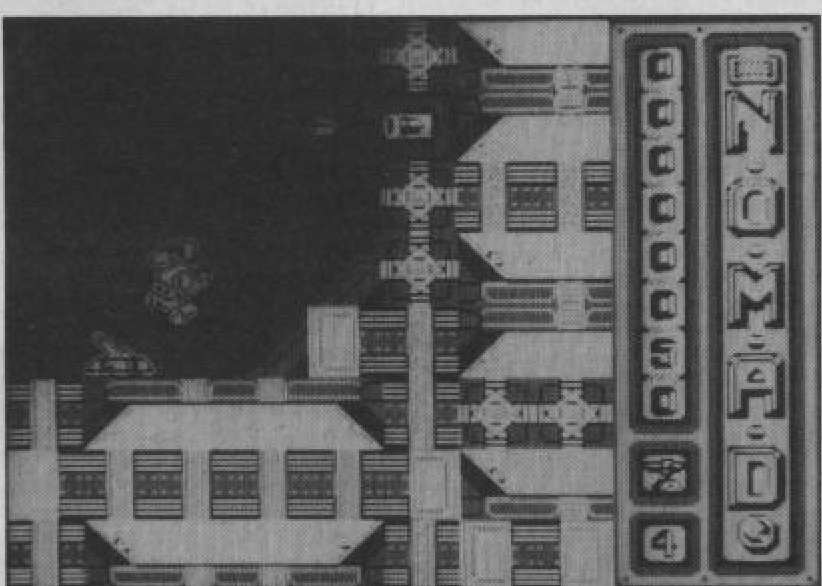
N.O.M.A.D. has twin guns which fire powerful shells: useful against the TALOS defence systems. The little droid's control system is similar to the control method used in *Asteroids*. First you need to rotate through the points of the compass until you're pointing in the right direction, and then apply thrust to move. N.O.M.A.D. has a lot of inertia, so trundle around with caution — it's easy to go blundering into trouble. Reverse thrust is available if you need to slow down in a hurry.

Gross has made sure that the route to his HQ is a well fortified one, and hazards lurk at every bend. The city walls are bristling with guns activated by your presence, and sometimes they're surrounded by magnetic walls — Magnetrons — which drag your metal body towards them. There are robotic guards too, which suddenly appear and make a suicide run towards anything they reckon is hostile, you especially. The most dangerous part of the city's weapons system are the heat seeking missiles. When these are activated they home in towards you at high speed until they either hit you or are destroyed.

Gateways activated by switches mounted in the walls of the complex connect the sections of the asteroid. Brushing against the switches generally opens doors, but the maintenance droids that look after the asteroid are terrible, and some switches don't open the **right** doors . . .

As you move through the passageways destroying the defence systems a counter on the right of the screen keeps tally of your score — the faster it spins, the better you're doing. You begin the game with four lives, and when one of the nasties scores a hit you lose a life and N.O.M.A.D. is reincarnated a few screens back along the maze.

Even if N.O.M.A.D. manages to negotiate all the heavily defended passageways and arrives at the Inner Sanctum, you can be sure that the Arch Baddie Gross isn't going to come quietly — a shootout to the death ends the game. Let's hope the goodie wins through!



A tricky bend on the path to Gross's lair. The wall-mounted cannon on the right has just fired a laser bolt.

CRITICISM

● **"This is a very neat game. Great touches abound, thank heaven, because without them it could have been very boring. It took me a while to master the control system for** N.O.M.A.D., **but the way it spins and bounces off the walls is excellent. Colour is used abundantly, and sensibly too! I thought the scoring system was brilliant, though it takes some time to build up a lot of points. Basically this game is well worth a look, because I found it addictive, enjoyable, and generally good, but for the price."**

● "N.O.M.A.D. *is a very good and colourful shoot em up/maze game, with lots of enemies to stop you in your tracks as you trudge around Gross's heavily armed homeworld. The inlay really sets the scene as you jump inside your N.O.M.A.D. and you get a comprehensive run down of what you are about to encounter and what you've got for and against you. The scenery is very detailed and colourful, with lots of interesting things to look at as you bounce around. The controls of the N.O.M.A.D. give a good feeling of inertia and I found myself constantly swinging and swaying in my chair as I played. This is one of Ocean's better current releases and represents quite good value for money at £7.95.*"

● "Although *N.O.M.A.D.* is rather simplistic it's highly enjoyable to play. The control method with its intertia is really nice and allows you to skid about the place while taking pot shots at the enemy. Graphically it's excellent with some really interesting backdrops. It's funny really, how this, one of Ocean's better games, has been released without any sort of hype or fuss, with only one or two adverts heralding its appearance . . . perhaps the shape of things to come? Anyway, the game is great fun, and to my mind, only just misses the CRASH Smash it deserves."

COMMENTS

Control keys: R, U forward thrust, D, J backward thrust, Z, M rotate left, X, SYMBOL SHIFT rotate right, 5, 7 fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: a bit awkward
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: attractive, neatly done
Sound: usual firing noises
Skill levels: one
Screens:
General rating: a neat game

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	87%
Playability	79%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	82%
Value for money	77%
Overall	79%

YABBA DABBA DOO!



Producer: **Quicksilva**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Taskset**

Fred Flintstone finds himself at the dawn of history, Before Bedrock. He is a bachelor, and you have to help him create his caveman's paradise so he can woo and win Wilma. At the beginning of the game, the landscape is barren but work is in progress . . . Bedrock is being built and Fred wants a home.

Fred begins on a plot of land littered with rocks and a sign saying 'home'. All the small rocks are useless and must be taken to the pit where they can stay out of harm's way. Picking up a rocklet at at time, Fred earns fifteen points when his heaves it into the pit marked 'tip'. When his building plot is empty, Fred can collect the larger rocks and drop them there — sections of his house appear as if by magic, and two hundred points are added to the score for each large rock deposited.

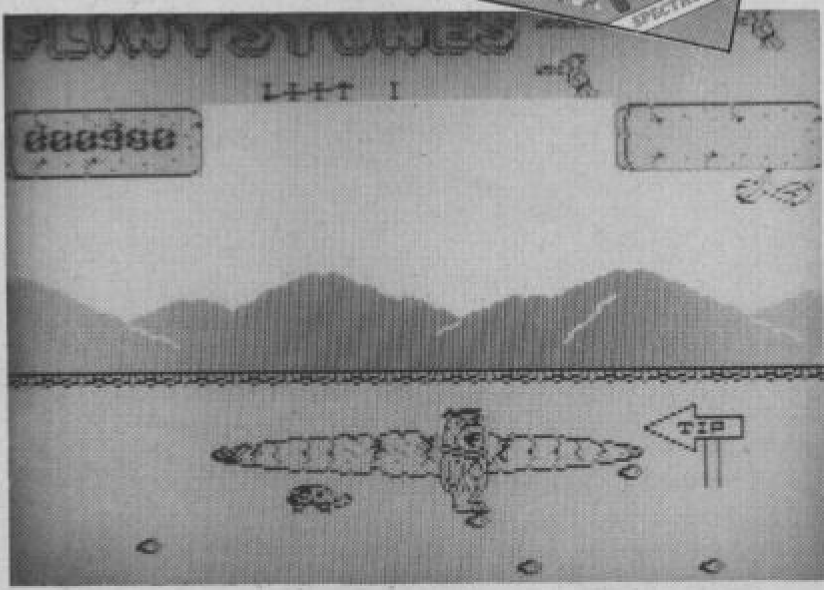
There are, of course, several complications. Various prehistoric animals knock Fred over when they encounter him, while others nip his heels and pterodactyls drop rocks on his cranium. Fred's state of health is shown by two slabs of stone at the top of the screen, which are nibbled away by pecking birds. The first scale denotes Fred's energy level — whenever he runs, energy is burnt up. When the scale reaches zero, Fred can't run any more and needs a rest or a meeting with Wilma to revitalise his flagging spirits. The second display shows the number of bites received from pterodactyls, turtles or dinosaurs, and indicates how much of the current life remains. Lives are displayed as tally marks below the two scales, and up to eight lives may be selected from the option screen at the start of the game.

The game is played against a backdrop of mountains. Fred can move left and right across screens which flip from one to the other. Bedrock consists of a number of streets running parallel to the mountains, and pressing up or down while Fred moves off a screen causes him to move one street closer to, or further away from, the mountain range.

Once the walls of his house are built, Fred needs to go to work in the quarry to earn money so he can hire a dinosaur to help with the roofing work. Once he's earned enough loot a dollar sign appears on the screen, and our prehistoric hero can nip to Dino Hire and lease his assistant. With the roof in place, the last task is the addition of a chimney, after which the house is complete and Fred can look for Wilma to try and encourage her to embark on holy matrimony.

Meetings with Wilma during the home-making stage boost Fred's enthusiasm for his work and Wilma's love for him — shown by a beating red heart on the right of the screen. Each time Fred finds Wilma, he gains 1,500 points. The faster the heart is beating when the desirable residence is complete, the better Fred's chances are of persuading Wilma to join him.

While Fred is working away, his neighbours are busily constructing Bedrock — a 5,000 point bonus can be collected by finishing before the rest of the town is built. In order to get about, and find those useful large rocks Fred could really do with a car. The good news is — there's a car lurking somewhere in the game for Fred to use.



Fred wanders past the tip in YABBA DABBA DOO, running away from a nipping turtle that saps his energy

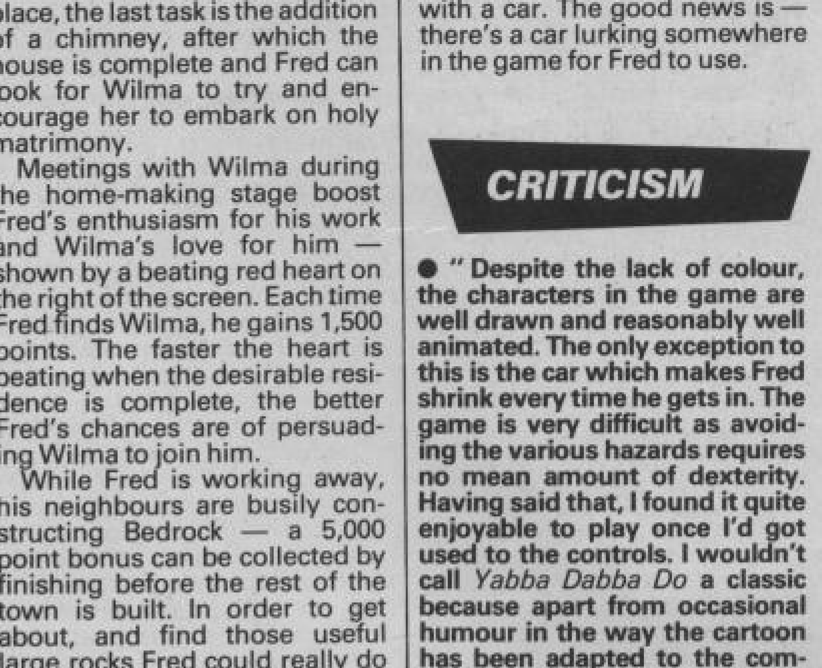
CRITICISM

● **" Despite the lack of colour, the characters in the game are well drawn and reasonably well animated. The only exception to this is the car which makes Fred shrink every time he gets in. The game is very difficult as avoiding the various hazards requires no mean amount of dexterity. Having said that, I found it quite enjoyable to play once I'd got used to the controls. I wouldn't call *Yabba Dabba Do* a classic because apart from occasional humour in the way the cartoon has been adapted to the computer, there are too many repetitive procedures. Still, it provides a challenge and a bit of fun. If you're a keen fan of the cartoon, you probably will find the game worthwhile. "**

● *" I had my doubts about whether the Flintstones series could be converted successfully to a computer game. I think I can safely say that* Yabba Dabba Doo! *is a great game: Taskset have kept the spirit of the Stone Age throughout surprisingly well. Within a short time I had really taken to this one, now I can't see myself putting it away for quite a while. The graphics are largish, jolly, detailed and all the characters are recognisable. The sound is fairly run-of-the-mill — a nice tune on the title screen, and a few burps and rasps here and there. The only niggle I have about this game is that it may be a little easy to complete, so it might not have much lasting appeal for good games players. "*

● " I found *Yabba Dabba Doo!* a very addictive game — playing it to the early hours of the morning. Although graphically I found it not too astounding (the animation of the creatures is not too hot, but they are very detailed), its shortcomings were made up by its sense of fun and user participation, with lovely features like driving the rock car and going to see a film at the drive-in. Building the house for Wilma before the rest of Bedrock is complete is vary hard to do, as the other people (I never really saw any) don't have to clear **their** sites. I felt a bit on my own in Bedrock with no other cavemen/women in sight, except Wilma. No Barney I'm afraid to say. I was a bit disappointed by the lack of a full length Flintstone theme tune. I'm an avid viewer of the TV series, and will be an addicted player of the computer game for a long time to come. "

YABBA DABBA DOO. Fred's home begins to take shape in Quicksilva's game which has you building Bedrock

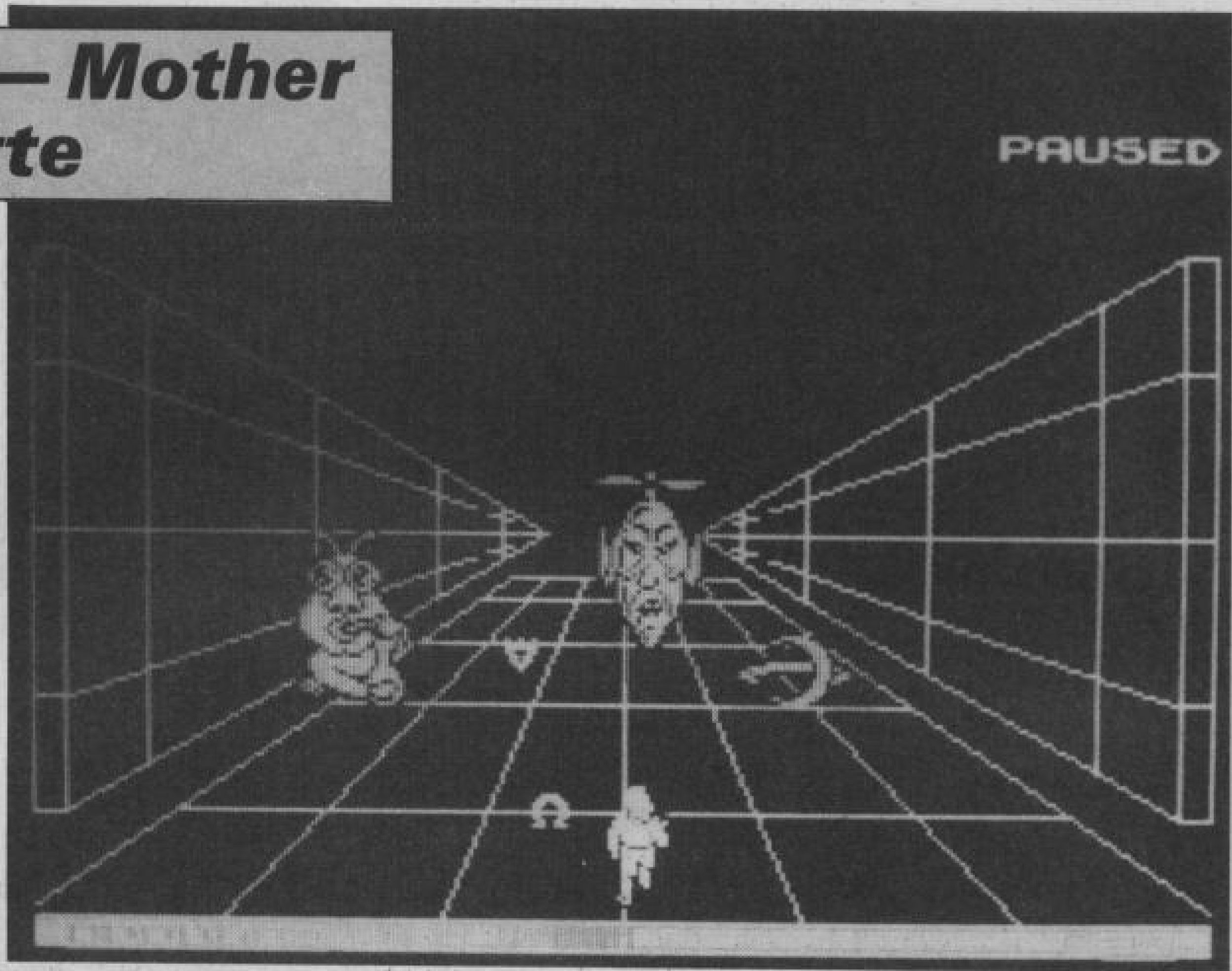


COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, bottom row to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: quite responsive
Use of colour: simple, but effective
Graphics: well drawn and amusing
Sound: very nice intro, but otherwise sparse
Skill levels: up to eight lives
General rating: a good game, great for Flintstone fans.

Use of computer	**77%**
Graphics	**77%**
Playability	**78%**
Getting started	**79%**
Addictive qualities	**82%**
Value for money	**80%**
Overall	**81%**

TWISTER — Mother of Charlotte



Producer: **System 3**
Retail price: **£7.95**

Twister is the name of a demon from the depths of hell. Apparently she's one of the worst. Together with her horde of unspeakable nasties, she intends to ruin mankind once and for all. Out of the world's 4.5 billion population, you have been chosen to fight for mankind's survival. To do this, you have to travel through your own subconscious in order to gather various sacred symbols that will enable you to vanquish Twister and her mob of killjoys.

The first section involves jumping across a series of platforms as they approach and collecting the objects that appear on many of them. Whilst you are attempting to do this, Twister's twisted minions appear above you. To avoid their wrath it's necessary to shoot them down using psychic weaponry with which you have become equipped whilst collecting four special suits of cards that appear while you're fighting.

The next section has you travelling down a gridwork corridor and again you must avoid the demons. This time characters of the word of Ultimate Power have to be collected. The next corridor is walled but is otherwise similar to the last screen except that signs of the Zodiac have to be collected. If success is achieved here, a jet pack appears on the back of your character and amidst dramatic bolts of lightning, he rises from the corridor. At the top of the screen, the Evil twister appears as a snake wrapping itself around a planet. Demons must be eliminated before the triangle of truth finally materialises. If that's touched in time, the warhead of the psychic bolt displayed at the base of the screen begins to flash. A direct hit down Twister's throat is necessary to kill her and you only have one chance. Time your shot well . . .

The objects appear one by one every time you shoot a demon. Touching one allows you to pick it up. However, two objects cause either a loss of energy or the loss of the last object to have been picked up. One of the useful objects is a triangle of darts which gives extra firepower when collected.

The layout is simple enough. At the base of the screen an energy bar indicates current strength whilst the number of shots remaining are also displayed. At the top of the screen, any important objects that have been collected are shown. The background is black with yellow platforms approaching from the void, becoming larger as they get nearer.

A 3D scrolling walkway rolls forward at you and the nasties keep on coming. If I was called Charlotte, I'd sue. TWISTER, from System 3

CRITICISM

● **" Despite the rather inane plot, this proved to be an enjoyable shoot em up. It's not too difficult to get quite far in the game so perhaps expert blasters will find it lacking as a challenge. Even so, the sprites are well drawn and animated, often being quite imaginative and amusing. One of the corridor screens is very much like Atari's old *Tempest* game but otherwise there's a reasonable degree of originality to be found. If you're after a fast, fun arcade game then this could be just what you're looking for. "**

● *" Twister Mother of Charlotte is one of those games that I can't get my teeth into at all. The graphics are very good, there are many detailed characters and the forward scrolling of the platforms/stepping stones is brilliant. The sound is fair with no tune on the title screen and only a few spot effects during the game itself. I just about managed to get onto the forth screen after about half an hour of play so it shouldn't be too hard to complete, if you can be bothered. The best thing about* Twister *in my view is the colourful front end which is quite entertaining. If you like fairly simple games with lovely graphics and no brain ache involved in playing then I recommend this game. "*

● " Although the scenario is all a bit daft, the game itself is quite a neatly presented shoot em up with lots of interesting monsters to avoid or shoot. The scrolling playing areas which zoom out at you lend the the game a fair old pace, and leaping around coll ecting the right objects while avoiding the wrong ones and killing the nasties can get frantic. I enjoyed the Twister, no matter who Charlotte is! "

COMMENTS

Control keys: left/right O/P; S to jump; A to thrust; X to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Cursor
Keyboard play: reasonable
Use of colour: unimaginative
Graphics: beautiful sprites, good forward scrolling
Sound: rather limited
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 6
General rating: enjoyable if undemanding.

Use of computer	**72%**
Graphics	**80%**
Playability	**74%**
Getting started	**74%**
Addictive qualities	**68%**
Value for money	**69%**
Overall	**71%**

That spikey, snakey thing that looks like a planet is in fact TWISTER the root of all evil. The final confrontation screen from System 3's game



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BY D.K.MARSHALL

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CURSOR CONTROL Icon
Allows you to point the blue inventory arrow at an object you are holding before putting it down or throwing it.

PICK UP Icon
Nudge up to an object, select this icon, press fire and it will be added to your inventory. Accurate positioning of your figure is necessary.

PUT DOWN Icon
Returns an object from your inventory to the room you're in. Make sure the blue inventory cursor is pointing at the doobrie you want to leave behind.

GUN Icon
When you've got a shooter, this icon allows you to press the trigger. The little white dots above the box indicate the number of bullets remaining.

MOVEMENT Icon
Very useful for getting about!

SPEECH Icon
Selecting this icon inflates a speech bubble on the screen next to your character. Type in a few well chosen words on the keyboard and then press ENTER to "say" them.

PUNCH Icon
Biff! Allows you to deal out a forward jab during combat.

THROW Icon
Make sure the inventory cursor is pointing at the object you want to lob, and then select Throw to hurl it around the room.

INVENTORY AREA
Objects collected are displayed on this part of the screen. When you pick something up it is added to the right of the collection automatically, and the blue inventory cursor moves under it. At the moment, all you're carrying is a gun . . .



Producer: Imagine
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dusko Dimitrijevic**

M·O·V·I·E·



ABORT Icon
Concludes the game and returns you to the start screen.

HALT Icon
Lets you pause the game.

Early in 1985, Dusko Dimitrijevic invested in a one way plane ticket from Yugoslavia to this country. Confident that he could sell two computer games he had written to Bug Byte and thus fund his trip home, he arrived in Liverpool to discover that Bug Byte were no more. Dusko had a problem.

Fortunately, he managed to track down one of the directors of Bug Byte, who advised him to see Ocean. Ocean bought the games from Dusko, and used them as promotional freebies. Before he went home, the Yugoslavian programmer spent a little time with Ocean's programmers, picking up tips and hints on programming and getting a feel for the type of games Ocean wanted.

Six months passed, and then *M.O.V.I.E.* arrived in Ocean's offices. The game was snapped up, and appears on the Imagine label. Dusko Dimitrijevic should be able to afford return tickets in future . . .

CRITICISM

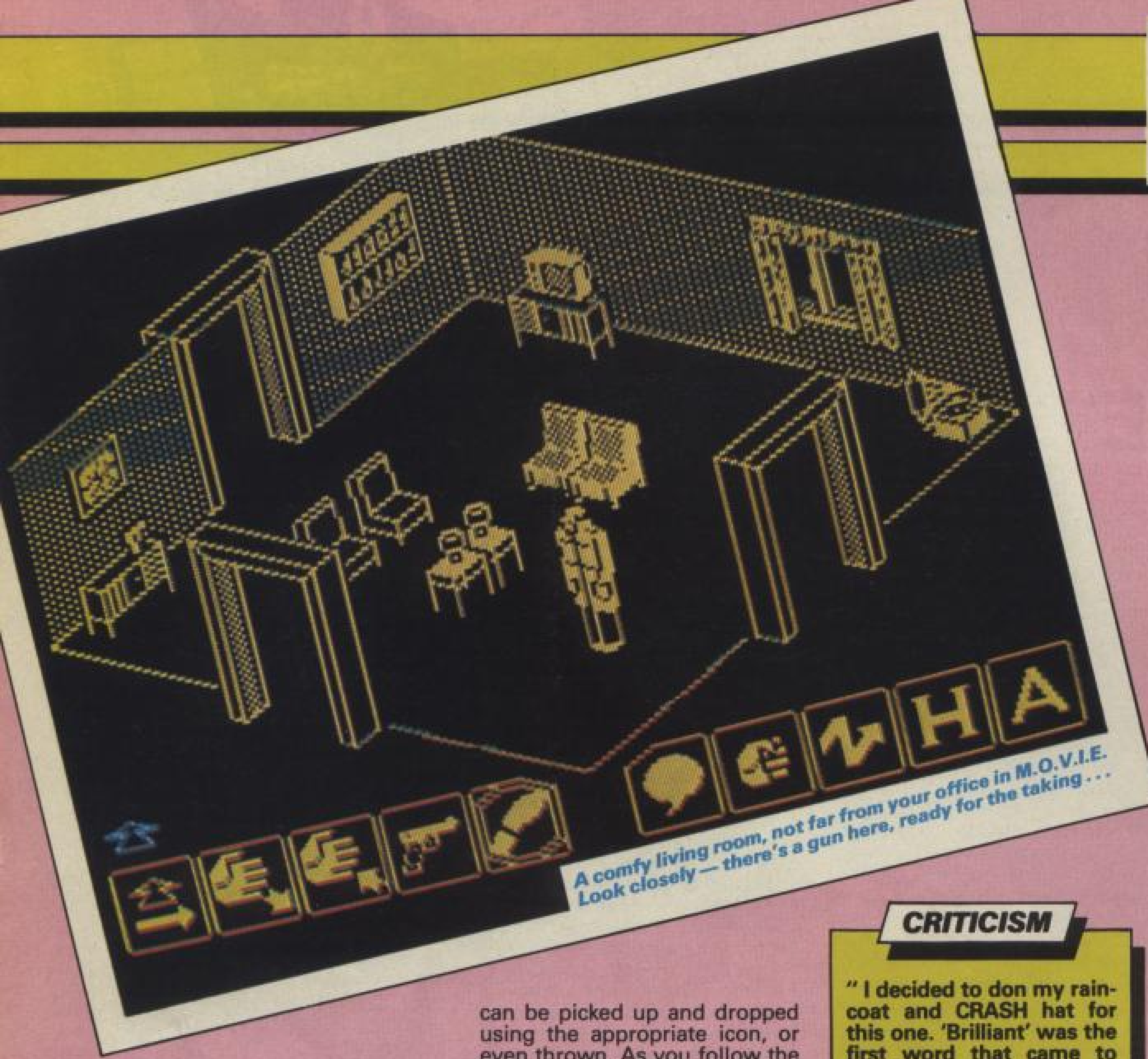
" There's lots of fun to be had exploring the locations in M.O.V.I.E. — nearly two hundred in all — and the detail in some rooms is very pleasing. Clocks tick and tape recorder spools whirl. The animation on the girls is really neat: they wiggle along enticing you to follow very convincingly. The icon control system is straightforward enough, but it can get a bit tricky at times when you need to enter a location which contains a gun-toting baddie — you have to flip from Move to Gun icon very quickly to get a shot in. The girls begin in a random location, so each time you play the game is a little different. Overall a great game, with lots of atmosphere. It's a shame there's not more sound, though. Should keep anyone busy for quite a while, solving the puzzles it contains. "

M.O.V.I.E. is based on a New York gangster theme, and puts you in the shoes of a Philip Marlowe character. You're a private detective who's been hired to recover an audio tape from a gangster'e HQ. First, you have to find a girl, who will lead you to the mob's base — but to make life that bit more difficult she has a dead ringer, a twin sister no less. The bad sister spells trouble, with a capital T. The first major task in the game is to find the right girl, then it's a matter of following her and protecting her from harm on the way to the Boss's hideout.

Set in New York, the game begins with your character in an office in the Big Apple. Suddenly, business becomes brisk. It's time to leave, and take a closer look at the neighbourhood. Along the bottom of the screen there's a row of icons used to control the trenchoated private dick. Pressing the fire button puts the icon selecting cursor under the control of joystick and keyboard — another press on fire selects an icon. At the start of ▶



Out in one of the Alleys which link buildings in M.O.V.I.E., following the moll. The garbage men don't appear to be collecting this week.



A comfy living room, not far from your office in M.O.V.I.E. Look closely — there's a gun here, ready for the taking . . .

the game the cursor rests over the Move icon — a footprint — and it's possible to move in four directions around the room you're in. All the locations are monochromatic, presented in the three dimensional view that

CRITICISM

" WOW! Great graphics, the same viewpoint as in Knight Lore, Alien 8 **and** Fairlight, **but with 'real' objects with which you can identify, like armchairs, crates, TV's etc. They're not just fantasy objects. The game is quite original, presenting a fair challenge. The graphics far surpass the other game elements. I won't do the obvious thing, and say they are 'filmic', but excellent they are. Sound is a bit sparse, little beyond footsteps, and maybe the use of colour should have been a bit more adventurous. For me,** M.O.V.I.E. **keeps Imagine, of** Yie Ar Kung Fu **and** Mikie **fame, well up at the Ultimate level. "**

has become familiar with Ultimate's releases, and games such as *Fairlight* and *Sweevo*.

Some of the objects found in locations can be shoved around — like chairs and tables. Others can be picked up and dropped using the appropriate icon, or even thrown. As you follow the girl, she'll ask you do things for her, or fetch things, like a whisky. Bottles and bags come in handy when your guide needs bribing!

High on the list of priorities for any self respecting gumshoe is a gun. Once you've found one, the Gun icon comes into play, and a row of bullets appears above it. Each time a shot is fired a bullet disappears from the display. At last — you can waste people - but once the ammo runs out, all you can do is hurl the weapon at a baddie's head. It's time to find another gun.

The playing area encompasses several buildings, interlinked by streets in which dustbins and packing cases as well as the odd telephone booth can be found. The mob realise what you are up to, and heavies lurk in some locations waiting to give you a bad time. Some just punch — and using the Punch icon, you can fight back — while others pack a mean shooter. Getting too close to a bullet spells curtains, and your trenchcoated figure dissolves before the game returns to the start screen.

As an aid to communication, the Speech icon allows conversation by inflating a speech bubble above the figure of the Private Investigator. Type in what you have to say, and consider it said. The other characters in the game won't accept direct orders but can be friendly and sometimes downright helpful after a bit of verbal. (Don't be tempted to make improper suggestions to the mini-skirted girls — they reject your advances.) Some of the doors are guarded, and you'll need to pop the password into a speech bubble to get through. It's possible to guess some of the passwords, but persuading the girl or other characters to let you have passwords is an important part of the game.

CRITICISM

" I decided to don my raincoat and CRASH hat for this one. 'Brilliant' was the first word that came to mind as I entered a very posh American type towerblock office, a quick look out of the window and I thought I'd better dash, so I ran out of the room and promptly bumped into a very suspicious looking coffee table. I proceeded and found an un-fingerprinted gun — might come in useful, I thought. I was right . . . Imagine's first step into the monochromatic world is a success — in my mind anyway. M.O.V.I.E. **is the most enthralling game I've every played. The scenario is a classic one, and one that I've never seen implemented before in a proper arcade/adventure game. (Mugsy was strategy, before Ed starts getting letters.) Everything's fabulous — the graphics are amazingly detailed and realistic, the game goes at a very sinister pace, a cursor with inertia and a parrot that repeats everything that you say. Stop watching those old gangster movies and jump in to one via your Spectrum and a copy of** M.O.V.I.E., **game of the year so far, for me. Now leave me alone and let me get back to finding this twin sister. "**

As you collect useful items, they appear in an area of the screen above the icons. A cursor points at your latest acquisition and if you want to throw something, make sure the cursor (controlled by its own icon) is pointing at the right missile. Sometimes you need to lob objects at things in a room so they can be moved within reach. The zigzag Throw icon sends missiles bouncing round the room, and a little practice is needed before throwing becomes accurate. Lobbing a bomb is very satisfying — when it comes to rest it explodes into the words "Bom" and wastes anyone in the vicinity!

At the end of the game (or after quitting with the A icon), two scores are presented. One score indicates the number of rooms visited as a percentage of the total number of locations in the game. The other, on a scale from 0.00 to 0.99, indicates how many tasks you have completed during play. It ain't easy being a shamus, Mac . . .

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1 to 0 fire, Q to P up, A to ENTER down, Caps X V N Symbol Shift left, Z C B M SPACE right
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive, once you get the hang of it
Use of colour: monochromatic locations
Graphics: detailed, and well animated. No wait between screens for rooms to be drawn
Sound: only footsteps as you stump around
Skill levels: one
Screens: 199 rooms
General rating: a neat development on the 3D theme with a very different scenario

Use of computer	**90%**
Graphics	**95%**
Playability	**93%**
Getting started	**91%**
Addictive qualities	**92%**
Value for money	**94%**
Overall	**93%**

FLYER FOX

Producer: **Bug Byte**
Retail price: **£2.95**
Author: **C Teufert & G Carbanaro**

As a specially trained, crack fighter pilot, your mission is to escort a Jumbo jet through hostile airspace. Flying right behind the Jumbo, you can see the sky ahead and an instrument panel before you. The panel consists of a compass, a radar showing the relative height of any other aircraft within the vicinity, an artificial horizon which indicates the extent of banking manoeuvres and fuel and score panels.

A crackling radio informs you of an impending attack (which seems to use sampled speech) just before several other fighters appear on the screen. Missiles are the only weapons available to fight the enemy but you are fortunately equipped with an infinite number of them.

As the Jumbo receives damage, messages appear on the fighter's console. If the damage reaches a certain level, the Jumbo plunges into the ground below and the game is at an end. If all the fighters are shot down before this happens, fuel is automatically replenished and the game proceeds to the next level. These are identical to look at but the enemy jets are far more deadly. They engage particular strategies intended to lead you away from the airliner so other aircraft can attack it without opposition.

When the fighters approach there isn't much time to react so the best thing is to keep an eye on the sights. They flash when an aircraft passes through. If a missile is fired soon enough after this, it will lock on to the target and hit it regardless of how fast it manoeuvres away from you.

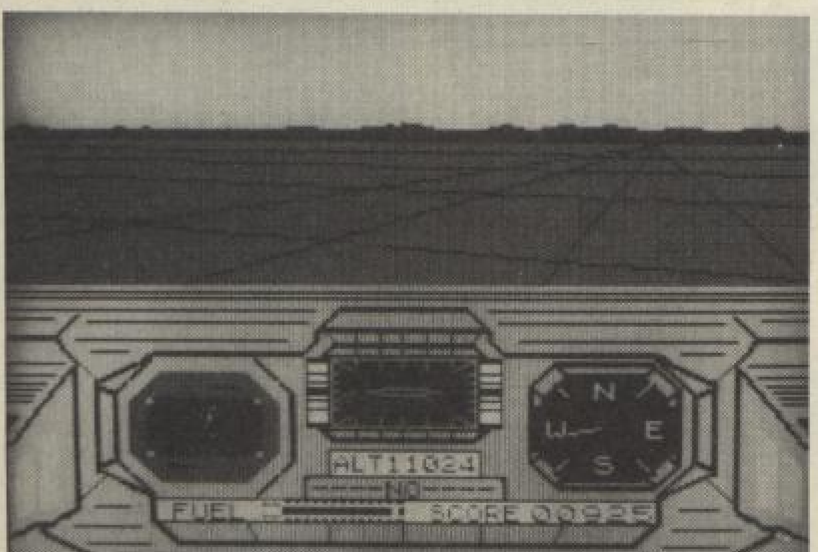
The airliner appears as a silhouetted cross-section in the sky. The problem with this is that all the other jets appear in the same fashion. What's more, they usually appear in the same area of the sky and so lead to confusion as to which jet you are actually aiming for.

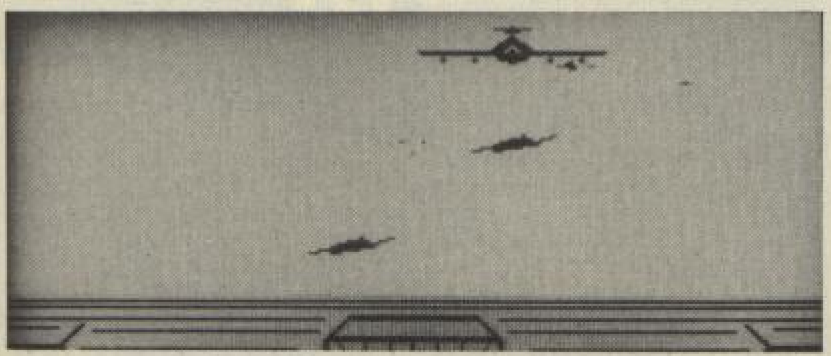
CRITICISM

● **"This is an old game which would probably never have been rereleased if it were not for a new Bug-Byte licensing deal. Unfortunately, its age shows. Graphics are neat but unremarkable and the sampled speech effects may have caused a stir in their day but have since been surpassed in terms of quality. Play is both repetitive and frustrating. The lack of variety in play soon results in boredom setting in. Hitting the enemy aircraft is also extremely difficult due to their incredible attacking speed. It really would have been more reasonable to have them moving more slowly on the first couple of screens. Finally, the fighter itself is far from easy to control and fails to respond well. This game would have been better forgotten.**

● *"* Flyer Fox *is quite an enjoyable game, for a while anyway. At the price, it's even better. The graphics aren't so brilliant that they make your eyes pop out, but they perform their purpose. Shooting the airliner is a bit like annihilating the refugees in* Zzoom *— it's fun, but doesn't do you much good! I found the speech a little hard to understand at first, but once amplified through my mega-fab soundbooster, it's quite realistic. For the money, despite its easiness, it is good fun for a while.*

Close to the ground in FLYER FOX. The chequerboard lines give the illusion of 3D movement





The aeroplane you are trying to protect comes under attack from a couple of enemy fighters. Are you pilot enough to fight them off in FLYER FOX?

● " *Flyer Fox* is the type of game that could be very addictive and playable if only the controls didn't mess it up completely — they are slow and unresponsive. The idea of the game isn't very original but there are some very nice touches such as the very good speech. The graphics are fairly run-of-the-mill, undetailed and shabby. Apart from the speech, the effects are poor. The slowness of the missiles means that careful aim has to be taken which is a hard task because of the strange controls, so it's very difficult to get anywhere in this game. However, I do think *Flyer Fox* is well worth the two and a half quid that Bug-Byte is asking for it.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/Z up/down; I/P left/right; V-M to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Protek
Keyboard play: generally a bit soggy
Use of colour: average
Graphics: below average
Sound: poor effects but reasonable speech synthesis
Skill levels: progressive
General rating: not bad for the price, although the program's age shows in lack of polish.

Use of computer	**53%**
Graphics	**58%**
Playability	**62%**
Getting started	**52%**
Addictive qualities	**65%**
Value for money	**70%**
Overall	**63%**

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

A look at the first release from a new software label: NU WAVE

Tired of conventional shoot em ups? Bored with run of the mill adventure games? Had enough of trudging round seemingly endless landscapes trying to solve obscure puzzles? Maybe you're the sort of person CRL are aiming their latest release, *ID*, the first piece of software for their new label, **Nu Wave**.

ID isn't a game in the usual sense of the word. It's much more of a computer entertainment — a puzzle, riddle or conundrum on a large scale.

Once you've loaded the program, you are presented with an empty screen and a flashing cursor prompts you to type something in. A counter at the bottom of the screen tells you that 'Trust' is currently 0%. Perhaps this is your first clue — folks who have fond memories of *Deus ex Machina* will immediately recognise the typeface in which the word 'Trust' appears. Aha! Mel Croucher had something to do with this product. And before he starts sulking, so did Clem Chambers of CRL (the chap on the end of the phone insisted we say this). The *ID* software is 'based on an original idea by Clement Chambers' as they say.

The scenario is rather strange. An alien life form has taken up residence in your computer. This life form, *ID*, was sent to Earth eons ago to observe, to maintain a watching brief without interfering in the affairs of man. *ID* has been many things. An electronic entity capable of assuming many forms, *ID* has witnessed momentous events and has been involved in incidents which have changed the history of the world.

Disorientated, confused, and with its memory shattered, *ID* is now in your computer. It is up to you to communicate with this creature, build up its trust, teach it and learn from it while gradually trying to draw out details of its past incarnations.

Throw away your joystick — this is a job for the keyboard. This is a text only game: *ID* uses the screen of your Spectrum as a teletype on which it gives vent to its opinions, fears, emotions. You can communicate with the creature inside the Spectrum via the keyboard, and input your side of the conversation using a maximum of one screen line — thirty two characters' worth, so keep it short and snappy.

"Hello" is a good way to start your journey with *ID*. From there on in, you're firmly on your own, communicating with the computer which displays a fair old bit of artificial intelligence. You know you're starting to make progress when *ID* asks for your name. In the final version, which we have yet to see, the computer, or rather *ID* will respond to long periods of silence on your part with a series of statements generated from a pool of phrases. In the copy that arrived at CRASH Towers, *ID* was quite happy to burble along for quite some time before grinding to a halt, and had to be interrupted frequently so someone could get a word in edgeways.

Gradually, as you build up trust, *ID* begins to piece together half-formed memories into patterns. Swinging between moods, violently at times, *ID*, tells you about the mood that is currently washing over it. "I feel incensed as we talk", it might say, turning the screen a deep red. It's up to you to probe, ever so gently at first, into the consciousness that has taken up residence in your machine. Gradually, as trust built up, you begin to make progress, prying answers and piecing together the puzzles that constitute *ID*'s previous existances.

Rush in with too heavy a dose of curiosity and *ID*'s trust will wane. Be rude, and you lose trust points. Every so often *ID* poses questions — honesty and consistency, on the whole, seem to be the best policies if you want to build up a working relationship with your . . . your . . . patient?

Describing this game, or computer entertainment, is very difficult to attempt without revealing the details of play. *Id*'s secrets are there for you to discover, and, according to the inlay, you may well discover something about your self on the way. The language generation routines used to put words from *ID* onto the screen are rather neat. Occasionally the persona trapped inside the RAM witters on, spouting near gibberish, but most of the time the sooths that *ID* has to offer are witty if not downright hilarious. Ever laughed at a Spectrum before?

There are some very neat touches in the responses. As *ID* chatters away. moving the flashing cursor over the top portion of the screen as the letters form into words on the glass teletype, jolly beeps and burps emanate from the computer. Tell *ID* to "SHUT UP" and he does so, immediately. And you lose a few trust points for being so crass.

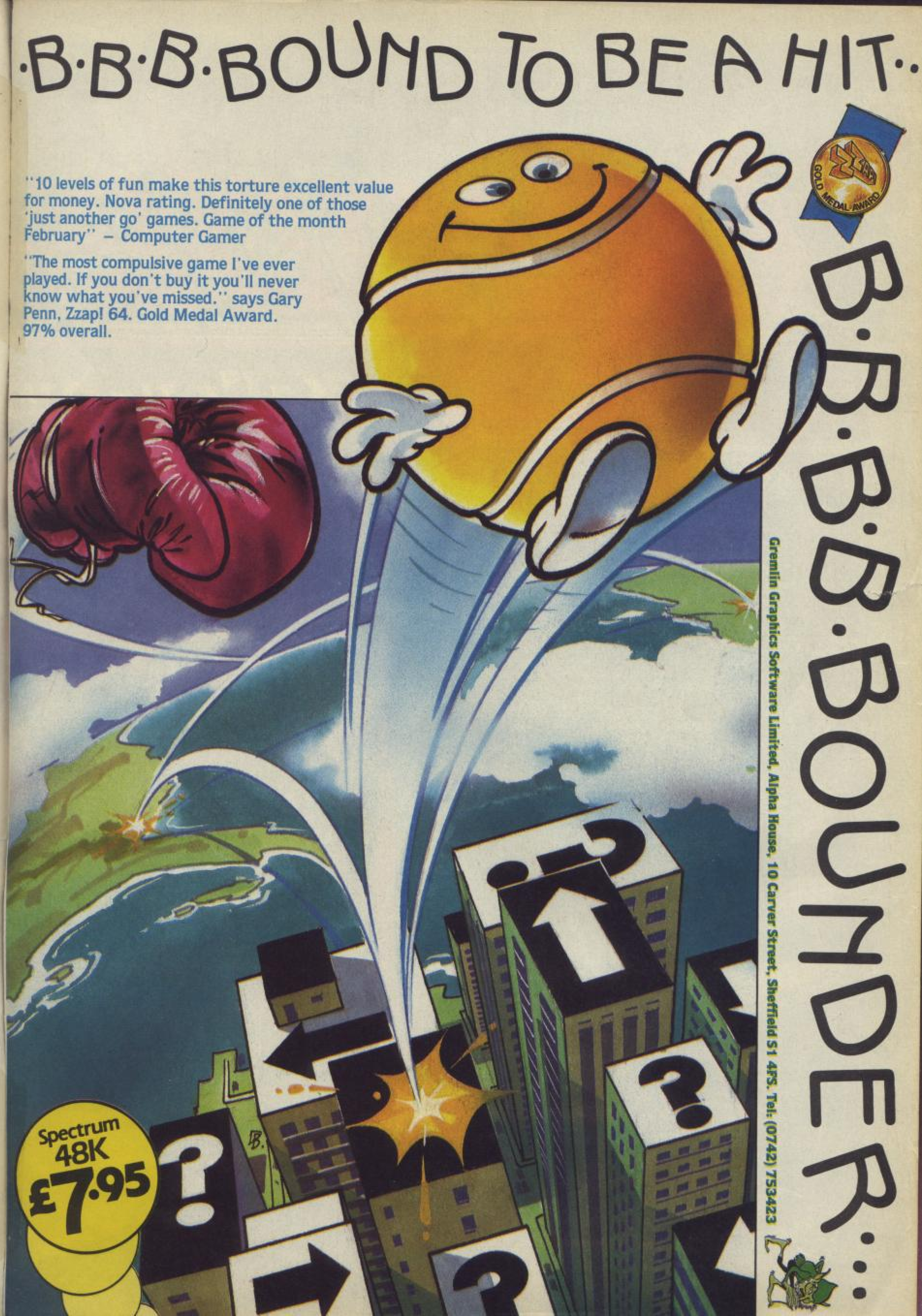
There's no need for a degree in analytical psychology — anyone can get chatting to *ID*, but a little historical knowledge comes in handy. Remember, *ID* has existed in a number of forms in the past and has been involved in historical events.

To begin with this program can be very frustrating as you thrash around, without a clue about what it is, exactly, that you should be trying to achieve. Once a few trust points are in the bag, however, the game opens up and soon you are likely to be hooked.

Lateral thinking is vitally important — don't always go for the blatantly obvious. That's about the only hint on offer here . . . And if all this questing after half-formed memories gets a bit much, you could always sit back and let *ID* do the talking — the program bears a not entirely coincidental resemblance to a famous language generating program, ELIZA. Not that Alan Turing, who lent his name to a test he devised to determine whether a computer was 'intelligent', would have been entirely fooled. Ah yes, "that reminds me of a joke I once witnessed a long life ago" as *ID* might put it.

The program involves some artificial intelligence techniques, and in a sense could be described as experimental software, interesting in its own right. Unfortunately, once you've worked out the various identities that *ID* has had in the past, that's it, you've spoilt it for yourself. Next time you load the game, the problem remains the same and there's isn't that much of a challenge left in making *ID* whole again. But then, the strange being locked inside your computer could be used as a conversation piece — it's quite fun just sitting back and seeing what it has to say.

This is the first **Nu Wave** release, and subsequent software will not fit easily into the games mould. The next project on the drawing board, apparently, is an adventure game for the Commodore which is played without text or graphics, using sound as the medium for communication. There are certainly some unusual ideas floating around CRL if *ID* is anything to go by . . . . maybe they'd like to do a follow-up called *EGO* based on a ZZAP64 reviewer!


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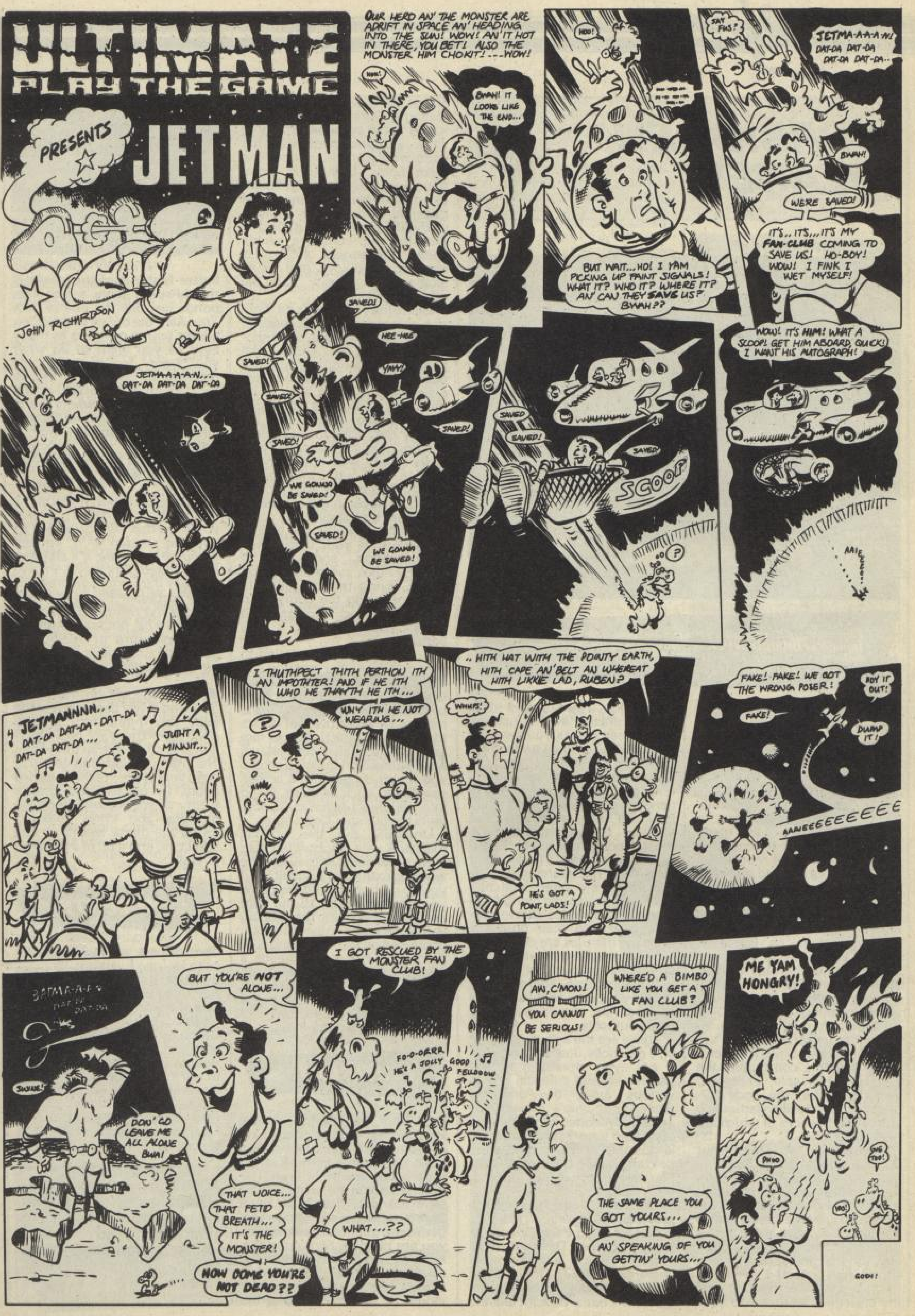
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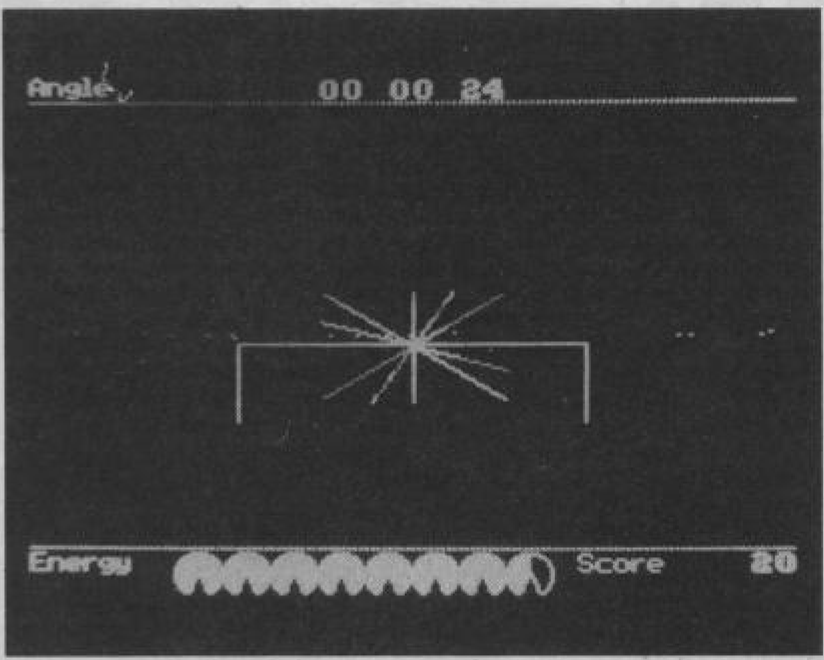
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OUR HERO AN' THE MONSTER ARE ADRIFT IN SPACE AN' HEADING INTO THE SUN! WOW! AN' IT HOT IN THERE, YOU BET! ALSO THE MONSTER HIM CHOKIT! ---WOW!
BWAH! IT LOOKS LIKE THE END...
BUT WAIT... HO! I YAM PICKING UP FAINT SIGNALS! WHAT IT? WHO IT? WHERE IT? AN' CAN THEY SAVE US? BWAH??
JETMA-A-A-N! DAT-DA DAT-DA DAT-DA DAT-DA...
BWAH!
WERE SAVED!
IT'S.. ITS... IT'S MY FAN-CLUB COMING TO SAVE US! HO-BOY! WOW! I FINK I WET MYSELF!
JETMA-A-A-N... DAT-DA DAT-DA DAT-DA
SAVED!
HEE-HEE
SAVED!
SAVED!
SAVED!
WE GONNA BE SAVED!
SAVED!
SAVED!
WE GONNA BE SAVED!
SAVED
SAVED!
SAVED!
SCOOP
WOW! IT'S HIM! WHAT A SCOOP! GET HIM ABOARD, QUICK! I WANT HIS AUTOGRAPH!
JETMANNNN... DAT-DA DAT-DA - DAT-DA DAT-DA DAT-DA...
JUtHT A MINNIT...
I THUTHPECT THITH PERTHON ITH AN IMPOTHTER! AND IF HE ITH WHO HE THAYTH HE ITH...
WHY ITH HE NOT WEARING...
.. HITH HAT WITH THE POINTY EARTH, HITH CAPE AN' BELT AN WHEREAT HITH LIKKLE LAD, RUBEN?
HE'S GOT A POINT, LADS!
FAKE! FAKE! WE GOT THE WRONG POSER!
BOY IT OUT!
FAKE!
DUMP IT!
AAAIEEEEEEEEEE
BUT YOU'RE NOT ALONE...
DON' GO LEAVE ME ALL ALONE BWA!
THAT VOICE... THAT FETID BREATH... IT'S THE MONSTER!
HOW COME YOU'RE NOT DEAD??
I GOT RESCUED BY THE MONSTER FAN CLUB!
FO-O-ORRR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOOOW
WHAT...??
AW, C'MON! YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS!
WHERE'D A BIMBO LIKE YOU GET A FAN CLUB?
THE SAME PLACE YOU GOT YOURS...
AN' SPEAKING OF YOU GETTIN' YOURS...
ME YAM HONGRY!

FORBIDDEN PLANET



Fast moving 3D graphics astound and amaze in Design Design's FORBIDDEN PLANET Not power pills, but Pacmen indicate your energy level in FORBIDDEN Planet as you try and collect the pieces of code

Producer: **Design Design**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Simon Brattel**

After a lot of trogging around, space battling and generally flying through rectangles in *Dark Star*, the hero of that game (you) now needs to collect a message from the *Forbidden Planet*. It's not any old message though, oh no, this message is the Evil Lord's message. A message from a being still evil but no longer lord, this is the state of affairs he wants to change and by using his message he should be able to reinstate himself in power. The Evil Lord's message is a statement so devastating that it proves he's the only one fit to rule, so it's rather important he isn't in possession of it. Since it's such a really valuable commodity the Evil Lord has split, encrypted and distributed the code throughout a heavily garrisoned world the defences of which are near perfect.

Fortunate, then, that your fighting equipment is the very best to be found. The ship you fly is controlled similarly to the one in *Dark Star* but due to the increased graphic prettiness of its lasers is far superior. A decoding computer is also supplied for the decryption of any code pieces collected.

There are three types of enemy structure dedicated to your destruction. The first and most obvious are the tower structures firing laser pulses your way. A pulse can be dodged or destroyed with a modicum of talent. To put a tower out for the count a fair splashing of laser light is needed. Once well and truly trounced they retract into the surface. Guided missiles are most deadly, these are very hard to dodge and need a good zap to stop their hull-piercing activities. These are often launched from pole structures rising from planetary fortresses, that instantly retract into their housings once the missiles are on course. Third of the death dealing alien structures are the squat versions of towers that launch laser pulses your way. Hefty amounts of laser fire should neutralise these outposts.

These are the actively aggressive defences. Just as annoying, if not even more so, are the passive lines of defence. Within various areas of *Forbidden Planet* your ship's movements are strictly limited by the plasma ducts and force field networks. It is possible to totally ignore the field structures, but it's really the equivalent of flying through brick walls.

The player's interface with the real world of *Forbidden Planet* is achieved using a highly sophisticated scanner. This represents various objects with coloured vector graphics. The main action takes place over the planet's surface. Points of light on the planet surface convey the main feeling of 3D experienced. Very handy is the scanner's ability to show a representation of the various holes in the constraining force fields. Using the directional keys you move a gunsight around the main display, as the gunsight moves the attitude changes to follow the gunsight. Also for ship control a simple speed adjustment system is supplied. Two keys, one for an increase in velocity and the other to decelerate.

Each time your ship is hit there is a coressponding decrease in energy, and running out altogether ends the game. The health and condition of your power banks are constantly displayed via the krell meters along the lower part of the visual display. Another quick way to energy depreciation and death is flying into the invisible force walls. Every wall does have a hole in it, though, and this is highlighted by the ship's computer, a clever piece of machinery that also shows any scenery behind the holes. The enemy are aware of your computer's sophistication and set up dummy holes in the dislocation zones. Flying through here instead of taking the course through the correct force gap also gives your shields a fair battering.

A map screen is supplied to give details of your location and direction. The scope of the map is a little limited though it does contain a key. Your position is marked by an arrow that points the current direction you are taking. Any nearby code stores are displayed on the map screen and if you do get into a screen containing such an item, flying into the object releases its contents to your ship's computer.

Unluckily the the original message was fragmented into quite a few parts. Retrieval of the whole is extremely difficult but if you do manage to end the game you need to return to the start position. Also worth mentioning is *Spectacle II*, another program contained on the tape along with *Forbidden Planet* that needs a password to access it. No doubt Design Design will eventually release the password. What you will find is as yet unknown but it's likely to be entertaining.



CRITICISM

● **" What has Simon Brattel been doing for the past year? Anyway *Forbidden Planet* has been a long time coming and it is definitely worth the wait. The graphics are in the same vein as *Dark Star* but they have been improved upon and also in this game you get noises all the time you are playing. *Forbidden Planet* is fun to play but it does take a while to get into. I'm sure that after a few goes most people would be addicted. One of the better features of this game is the hi-score table which responds just like the one in *Dark Star*. Also the define keys option allows you to program as many keys as you want to do what you want, for instance, it's possible to program a key to fire, go up and go left at the same time. On the whole this is a very enjoyable game, though initially similar to *Dark Star*, it proves to be very addictive. Definitely one for any *Dark Star* freaks out there. "**

● *" Okay, everyone, if you didn't like* Dark Star *there's no way you'll like this. All it is really is an updated version of it. But updated all the same, it's still very good. I liked* Dark Star *— in fact I still play it from time to time, so I think* Forbidden Planet *is great. I noticed the front end has been reduced a bit, but I still enjoy the moral pleasure of seeing the colourful explosions after having totally obliterated an alien. "*

● " This follows on from *Dark Star*, and if you didn't look at the inlay you might think it WAS *Dark Star*. There's a new storyline and a few extras thrown in. The map is good, and colour is used very well — really splashed about in places, and there's plenty of sound, with good explosions and firing noises. I found the game wasn't all that addictive, and a bit of a let down overall.

COMMENTS

Control keys: entirely definable as to key and function
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: excellent
Use of colour: greatly improved on *Dark Star*
Graphics: more of them too, fast vectors
Sound: un-Brattelian, which is to say there is some
General rating: A good follow up (perhaps with some reservations), and a fast, intricate shoot em up in the classic vein.

Use of computer	94%
Graphics	85%
Playability	86%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**86%**

WILLIAM WOBBLER

Producer: **Wizard Developments**
Retail price: **£9.95**

William is a very strange looking character indeed. The bendy legs and arms with a short body but very long neck and a boggle-eyed, reptilian head would definitely make him stand out in a crowd. Except that William lives in a world where such abnormalities seem to be the norm. Pink clouds hang in a blue sky above pink and yellow trees that are dotted between craters. The whole place is riddled with cave networks ripe for exploration by William.

Hence the plot for the game. William has to wander around the cave systems trying to piece together ten clues in an attempt to solve a puzzle. William can climb, jump duck and walk to achieve this. Scattered around the caves are objects which when used properly help him to achieve his goal. Keys open up hitherto inaccessible sections, or even allow William to return to places explored earlier. Certain objects need to be carried in order to access game features such as having to find and carry a disk before you can save a game. An inventory of objects is available by pressing 'I'. When William uses an object, it appears in his hand automatically.

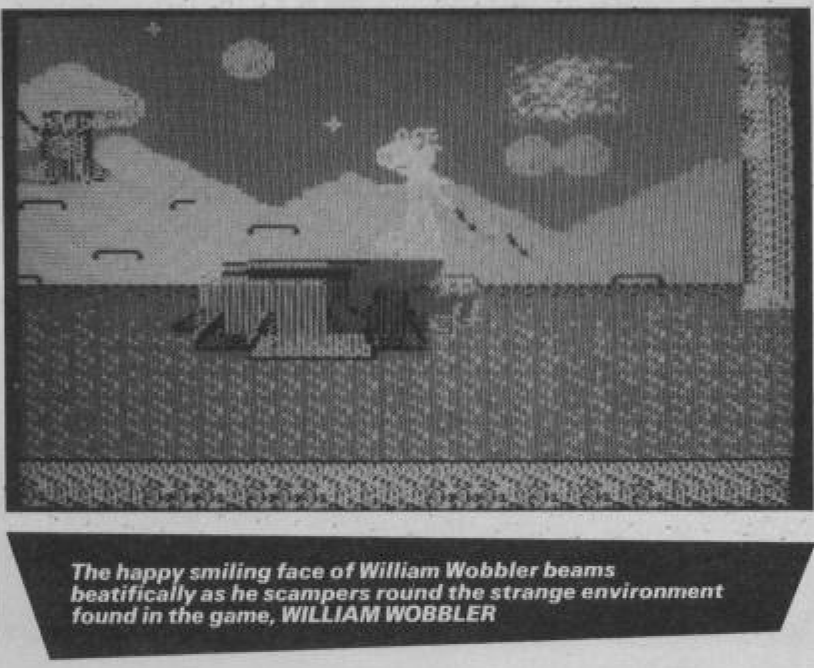
Strange looking snakes, flying toad-like creatures and mysterious blobs also hinder William's progress. Touching any of these results in the end of the game. *William Wobbler* provides you with only one life. William also suffers from aquaphobia, if he enters water he sinks never to reappear! A useful item is some kind of ladder that allows William to reach higher levels. He's rather a large chap and can't jump that far.

William himself is made up of several sprites so his head can wobble up and down on his long neck whenever he walks or jumps. Other creatures are made up of single colour sprites. The background uses limited perspective to add depth to the view and is drawn using hatch-worked and block colours.

Very little in the way of a proper scenario is provided because Wizard have made this a competition game. The first person to collect all the clues and subsequently solve the puzzle will win a mystery prize said by Wizard development to be worth £1,000. The Commodore version of the game has been around since about October last year but according to Wizard, nobody has solved it to date.

CRITICISM

● **"I think someone's tried to copy *Tir Na Nog* and made a complete hash of it. *William Wobbler* is a pretty boring fellow, slow and obviously a mute as I didn't catch much sound coming out of the speaker. It's nice and colourful but this seems to have caused a lot of attribute problems. The total lack of instructions makes starting off very hard, so I'm afraid Wizard are going to have to do a little better than this to book a space in my games playing sessions.**



The happy smiling face of William Wobbler beams beatifically as he scampers round the strange environment found in the game, WILLIAM WOBBLER

● *"Wizard certainly seem to have put a lot of effort into the packaging of this one. The first impression of the game is reasonable, with a very nicely animated Bill (of wobbling fame). Unfortunately, the bad points of the game seem to make more of an impression as you progress. The lack of sound takes an element away: I think a continuous tune would have made it more fun to play, and the single lift makes it frustrating. You can wander for hours, and unless you save the game, can be forced to re-start again just for coming into contact with another life-form. Colour is used profoundly, but this makes for an abundance of clashes. An admirable first effort from Wizard, marred by the bad points which, although few, spoil what could have been a good game."*

● "*William Wobbler* is a different kind of arcade adventure which we Spectrum owners have never experienced before, and it's not bad. The graphics are very colourful and as a result the screen is full of attribute problems but other than that the graphics are reasonable. The game itself is very playable and, if you like the approach, is reasonably addictive. If you like arcade adventures but nothing too tough then this one will probably suit you but I think that the asking price is a bit much. The problems are very devious but with some brain power it doesn't take long to get involved. Overall, quite a good game with the emphasis on arcade rather than adventure.

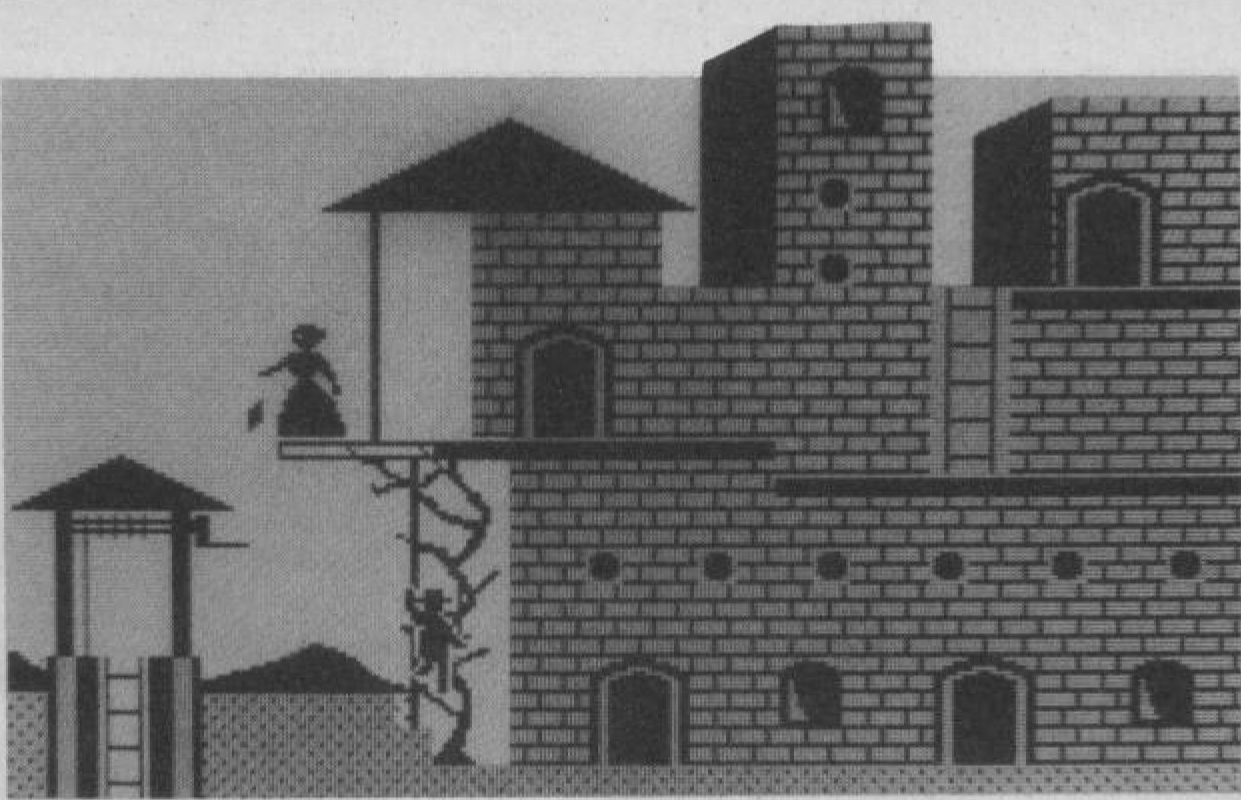
COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right; K/M up/down or duck; ENTER to jump or pick
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: straight forward and responsive
Use of colour: lively enough but too many attribute problems
Graphics: good, inventive sprites
Sound: poor
General rating: some good ideas and reasonable game play, marred by a few faults.

Use of computer	66%
Graphics	61%
Playability	61%
Getting started	67%
Addictive qualities	56%
Value for money	55%
Overall	**59%**

ZORRO

Producer: US Gold
Retail price: £7.95



Is that damsel in distress? Or is she just casting rubbish into the well. The Big Z is climbing the creeper to ask her in ZORRO

With a swish of sword and leap and a bound, *Zorro* arrives on the Spectrum after a brief sojourn on the Amstrad and Commodore. For those of you not terribly au fait with with early Hollywood attempts at adventure and excitement, the legend runs thus:

It's very simple really, *Zorro* is really 18th century Los Angeles equivalent of Batman. Defender of the innocent, scourge of evil, dreadnought of chicanery, you know the sort of thing. Anyway, *Zorro* is innocently strolling down the boulevard when his keen super hero eyes spot the evil Colonel Garcia abducting a fair maiden. This is not the sort of thing that *Zorro* allows to go unoticed but it soon becomes obvious that there's no way of catching up with the bloated villain so a plan must be decided upon. First on the agenda is the retrieval of the fair lady's handkerchief that she carelessly dropped during her kidnapping. The overall plan is to get to Garcia's jail and release her. To do this quite a few essential objects need to be collected and the first is the handkerchief.

Zorro is in fact one the now numerous arcade adventures, the sort where you have to collect an object to be able to get another object and so on until your ultimate aims are met. The important items designated for collection flash and are picked up by just passing over them. These are automatically added to the inventory. There are other artifacts around the different screens. These can be picked up, but only one item may be held at any time.

Zorro's repertoire of movement is quite broad. In classic arcade adventure style he can go left, right and jump. Fighting is also possible and more than probable when you encounter some of Garcia's henchmen.

The view of Zorro's immediate area takes up nearly all the screen. As Zorro passes off one side of the screen another view flicks into the scene. The main difference between *Zorro* and other arcade adventures is its ability to have the main character happily interacting with the background. Most of the different aspects of the background scenes can be employed in the most heroic of fashions. There are curtain rails that can be clambered along, trampolines to be bounced on and various other active props and pieces. The problems presented though are not the sort to be wholly solved by a deft hand and a quick eye. To get to greasy Garcia's stronghold a number of complex and not immediately obvious puzzles need solutions. The main obstacle is the underground cavern system. It's through here that the apparently useless items that have previously been collected (eg the damsel's handkerchief) can be used as keys to get past normally impassable doors.



The star of the game ZORRO sproings into the air with rapier poised in a cavernous region

CRITICISM

● **"So, the valiant sword-thruster of television fame strikes the Spec, eh? A lot of strategy is needed to get anywhere in this game. To me, initially, it was far too hard to make any major progression through the screens and if I hadn't had to write this review, I doubt I would have perservered long enough. The graphics on most of the screens are quite good, and Zorro himself walks, jumps, fights, and bounces around in quite a respectable manner. The loading screen is nothing special, and more could have been made of the game generally. It's good fun to play for a while, but then gets a bit tedious for my liking."**

● *"At first sight* Zorro *seems a little like* Bruce Lee *but don't be taken in by first appearances,* Zorro *isn't half as playable or compelling as* Bruce Lee. *The tasks are very logical (get key, open door) so the game will be fairly simple to complete after a little thinking. Graphically this game is sub-average, the characters are jerky and undetailed and the backgrounds are often a little garish. The sound is poor with an awful tune on the title screen and next to no spot effects during the game itself. Generally I wouldn't recommend this game as for eight quid it just isn't worth it."*

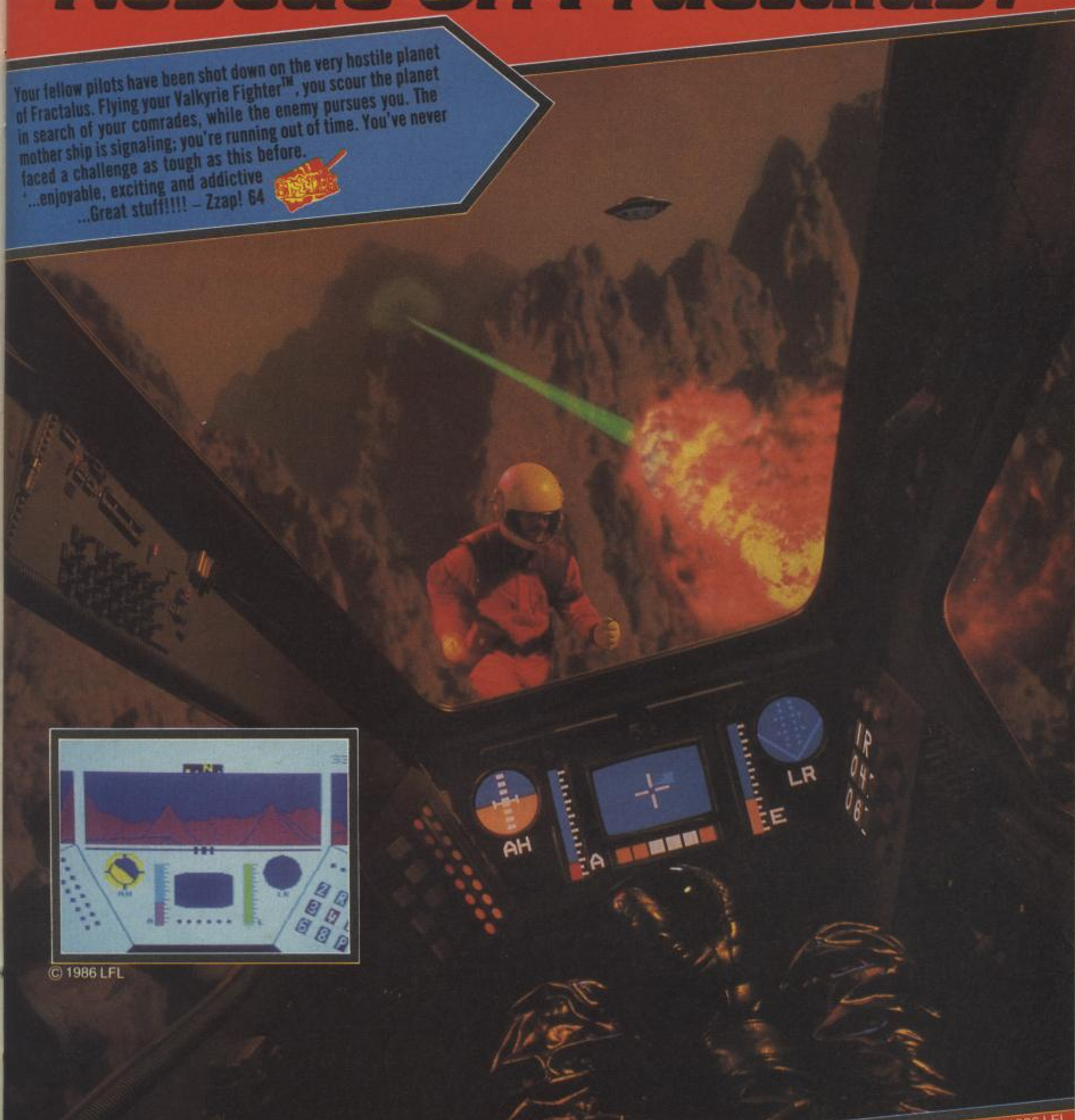
● "En Garde Monsieur, or should that be En Garde all tape buyers. If US Gold had kept up to their good standards *Zorro* would have been a good, addictive game, It turned out to be a waste of time, and not all that good. The graphics are small and some of the screens need a lot of time before you pass on to the next. You would have more fun watching black and white episodes of the films on the box than you would playing the game."

COMMENTS

Control keys: 2/W up/down; O/P left/right; Z to activate
Joystick: not stated, though options available
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: above average
Sound: poor
General rating: a good idea with some nice touches, that fails eventually in presentation.

Use of computer	**64%**
Graphics	**59%**
Playability	**54%**
Getting started	**54%**
Addictive qualities	**55%**
Value for money	**52%**
Overall	**53%**

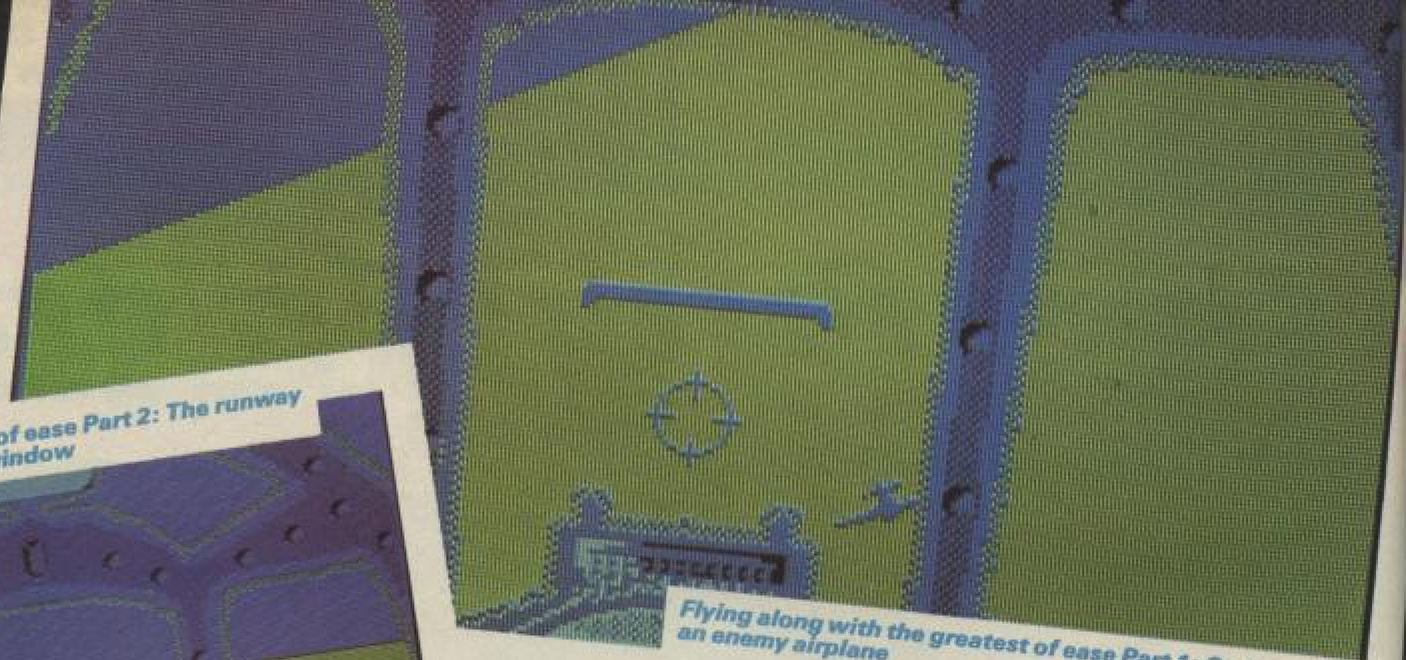
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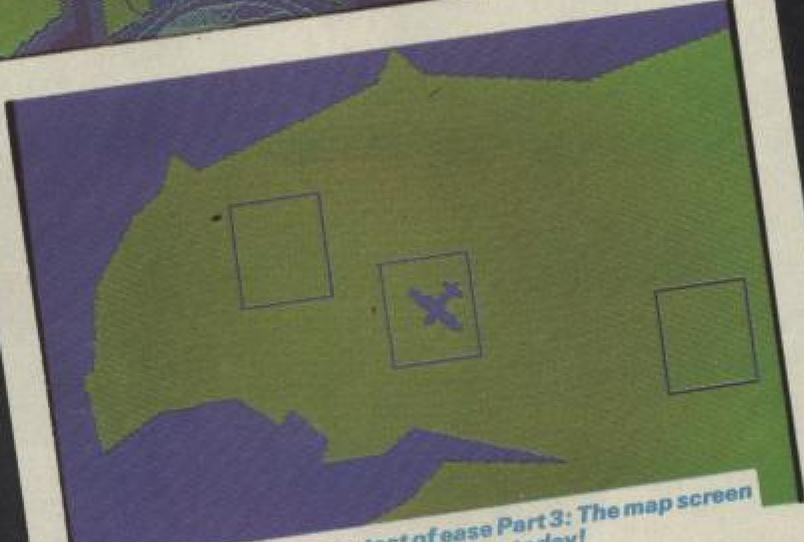
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Flying along with the greatest of ease Part 1: On the tail of an enemy airplane

Flying along with the greatest of ease Part 2: The runway appears through the cockpit window

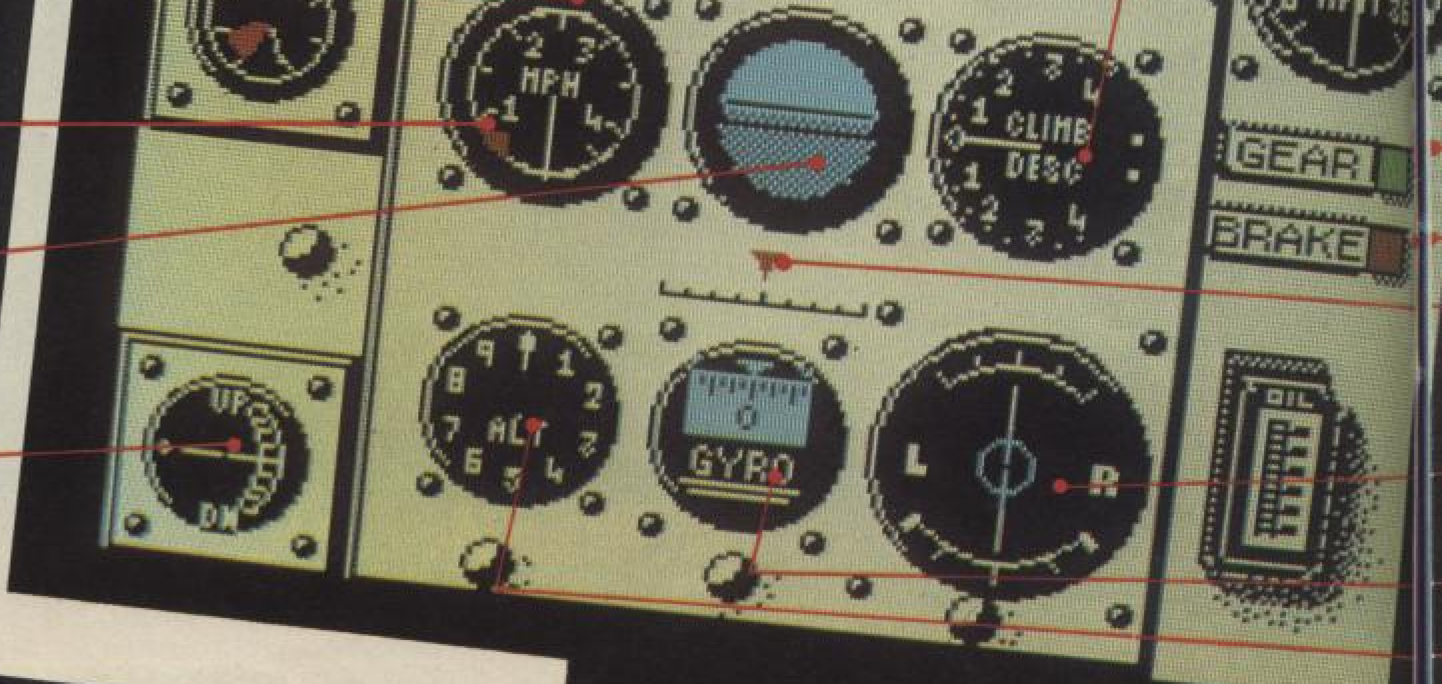




Flying along with the greatest of ease Part 3: The map screen — there's no enemy planes out to play today!



Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Conversion by Mr Micro**



S·P·I·T·F·I·R·E 40

Mirrorsoft's latest release allows you to take to the skies in the cockpit of a World War II aeroplane — the Spitfire, in case there's any doubt remaining! The game first appeared on the Commodore, nearly a year ago, and has now been launched on the Spectrum. It's the summer of 1940, and you've just been posted to a Spitfire squadron — a whole world of adventure is about to open up before you . . .

At the start of a session in the air you have to load a flying Log into the program — you can choose one of the pilots presented on screen or load in details of your own experience if you've already got some flying time in. The next task is to select which of the three modes you wish to use, choosing between Practice, Combat and Combat Practice. Practice puts you on the runway and gives you the opportunity to get to know the feel of the plane by allowing you to take off, fly around and land. In this mode there are no enemies present — it's very much a case of having the 'L' plates on.

The two combat modes pit you against enemy fighters. Combat Practice puts you in the air directly behind an enemy aircraft, and you can practise your gunnery technique. After a couple of enemy fighters have been destroyed, the opposition starts to get smart, behaving more like they would in a true war situation, twisting and turning to avoid your machine gun fire. Sometimes they loop the loop and end up on your tail and start machine gunning you! You're alerted to an enemy behind you by the plane appearing in your rear mirror — a nice feature which adds realism to the simulator.

True Combat mode puts you in an ongoing war situation. Starting on the airstrip you have to take off, find the enemy using the map, and fly the Spitfire for real, engaging the German pilots in dogfights. Once you have intercepted and shot down the enemy intruders you have to return to the airstrip and land safely. If the mission is a successful one then you can save your experiences to tape as a Log before going out on another interception run. The Log can then be reloaded as a flight history the next time you decide to take to the skies.

This Air-ace simulation features two separate screens, the view from the cockpit and the instrument panel, which have to be used in conjunction to fly the plane — a press on the space bar toggles between the two displays. A map screen can be referred to while you're flying to help you find the current position of the enemy planes. The main map shows the South East of England with your plane marked in red and enemy fighters in black. If your Spitfire is inside one of the three squares drawn on this map, you can examine the ground below you in greater detail by pressing the N key.

The game can be controlled entirely from the keyboard or from keyboard and joystick, in which case your joystick controls the Spitfire's ailerons and elevators, mirroring the stick displayed on-screen, and keypressed are required to activate other controls such as landing gear, throttle and rudder.

The instruction booklet contains all you need to know about flying the Spitfire in the game, and offers a fair few tips and hints on techniques for survival in the air. There's also a potted history of the Spitfire itself, and a brief introduction to the theory of flight as well as a short section on aerobatic manoeuvers.

If you do well then promotion is awarded according to your flying experience and the number of kills you achieve. If you do really well it is possible to rise through the ranks rapidly. Who knows? You could become a Group Captain with a string of medals including the VC, DSO, and DFC. Then you'd be ready for Mirrorsoft's next release . . . a game all about that famous Ace, Biggles!

CRITICISM

" Fast, fun and playable are just some of the great things about Spitfire 40. **Zooming around the screens . . . er sorry, skies, and blowing up all the enemy planes in sight is a challenge. The best simulation in years, with detailed screens, and great mobility as planes come up behind you. To start the plane at first was a bit hard, but as I got into it the problems were quickly overcome. Once I'd taken off, flying above the ground twisting and turning was great fun — an exciting game. If you get bored with trying to be an air combat hero, you can always try landing for another medal . . . Overall, a truly brilliant simulation. "**

CRITICISM

" Well, I suppose the Spectrum version had to come eventually. Mirrorsoft have certainly done themselves proud, with one of the best flying simulators on the Spectrum to date. The most pleasing part of this flying simulator is that the cockpit is simple and only contains the essentials. The flip/full screen option between the cockpit and instrument panel is put to good effect, and adds to the panic realism when getting into a good old fashioned dogfight. Perhaps a little more effort could have been put into the front end of the game, maybe using more colour and a redefined character set, but it does contain some good options, like saving a log book and choosing a Spectrum Plus or Minus set up. The thing that swung the balance away from the years old Fighter Pilot **is that** Spitfire 40 **allows the player to fly in a more competitive situation, with better confrontations with other planes — this is mainly due to the choice of the old Spitfire over the modern jet plane.** Spitfire 40 **is definitely the game to be bought now if you want a flying simulator. "**

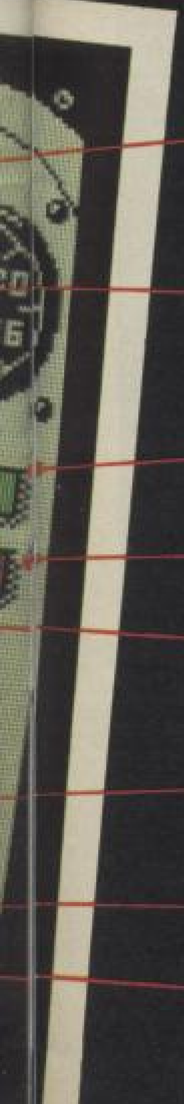
CRITICISM

" Bang on, Whizzo and Chocks Away — a great game! The instruction booklet supplied gives excellent details on all the aerobatic and combat manoeuvres you can perform. Despite the fact that I've never flown a Spitfire (!), I think I can safely say this is a pretty accurate simulation, considering the limitations. The facilities for combat and combat practice are very useful, as is the save game facility allowing you to build up a record of missions. The graphics are excellent, but the explosions could have been a bit more realistic. The plethora (LMLWD) of control keys may be a bit daunting at first, but once you get into the feel of it, it's great. I doubt that this will appeal much to those who are opposed to flight simulators, but if you're not one of them, get Spitfire 40 **— there's a good arcade element in there too. "**

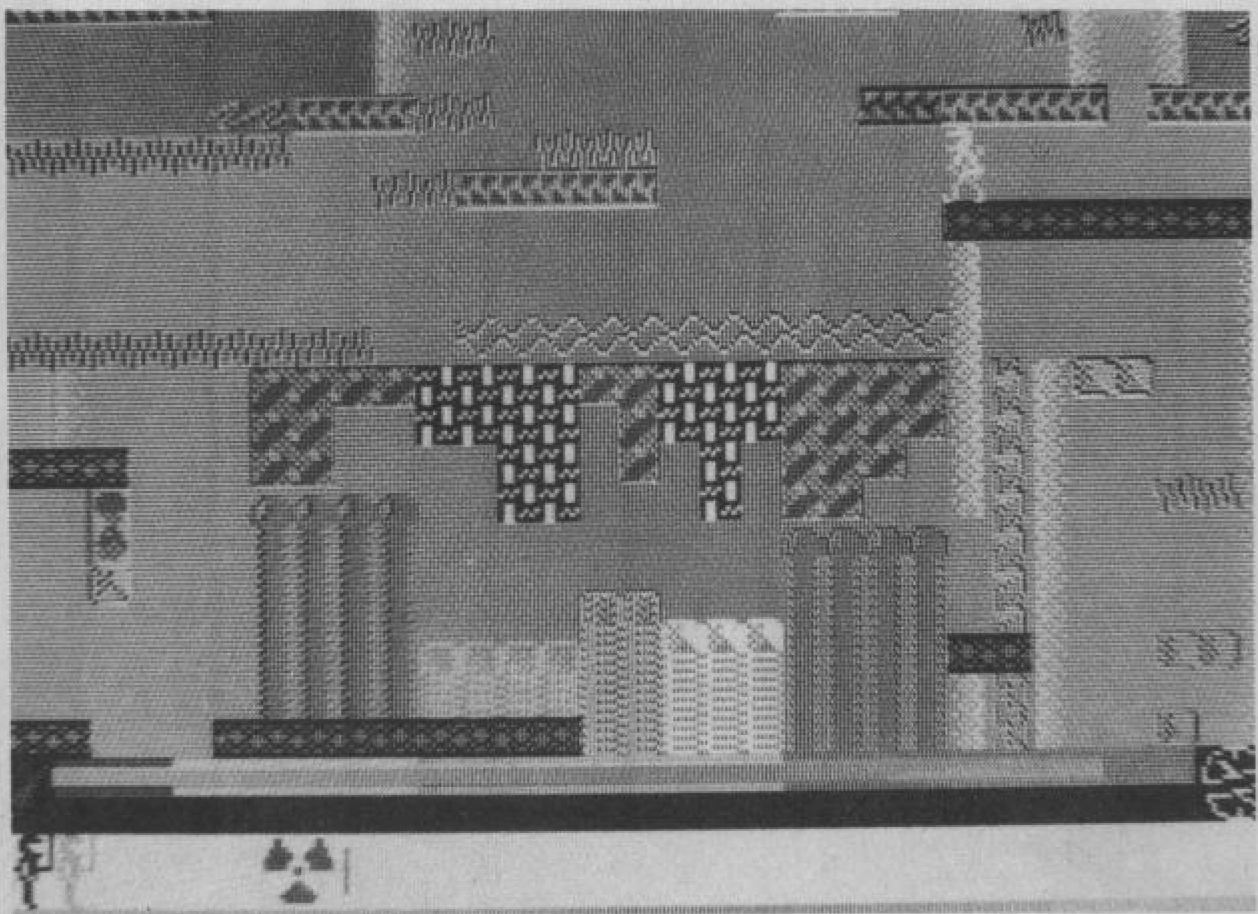
COMMENTS

Control keys: Spitfire Joystick: P up, L down, A left, S right, SHIFT or ; to fire. Z/X rudder left/right, Q/W increase/decrease power, F flaps, G landing gear, B brakes, M and N map control, SPACE to toggle between screens
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fine, once you get used to the controls
Use of colour: tasteful
Graphics: very fast and realistic, excellent instruments
Sound: mainly engine noise and firing
Skill levels: one
Screens: two, plus maps and menus
General rating: An excellent simulation which should appeal to arcade players too.

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	91%
Playability	88%
Getting started	93%
Addictive qualities	91%
Value for money	91%
Overall	**90%**







Inside the weird and wonderful supermarket that you have to negotiate in MYLA DI KAICH from Global. Just like Ludlow Market on a Saturday. . . .

MYLA DI'KAICH

Producer: **Global**
Retail price: **£2.95**

Though it may sound like something that you would plaster all over a shish kebab, *Myla Di' Kaich* is a space age supermarket stocking goods that range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Quite a few of the the things for sale would even be most dangerous if it wasn't for the comprehensive security systems. In fact a lot of the things for sale are dangerous since the comprehensive security systems have failed. Not only that, but all the life support systems have gone down, the warehouse robots are dangerously loopy, and the escalators and travelators are none too sane. It doesn't really matter does it, I mean it's not your problem is it? Well it wouldn't be if it weren't for your ship being in a sad state of repair and the only place to get spare parts is from *Myla Di'Kaich*.

Oh dear. Double unluckily, the spare parts needed are distributed very sparsely throughout the large area that the store covers. Since the life support system has gone AWOL, a space suit is needed to prevent sudden asphyxiation. The major hassle of shopping in *Myla Di'Kaich* is avoiding having the robots rip open your space suit — you only have four supplied originally and once you've run out the game is over. The oxygen supply is none too infinite either. A bar underneath the main playing section shows how much oxygen is left. Luckily various oxygen dispensers are placed in some of the stores rooms.

Once inside the store and on the hunt for pieces needed to put the ship back into action, you soon find the control method of your little chap very similar to that of *Jet Set Willy*. For those of you unfamiliar with *JSW* (have you been unconscious for the last two years?) the main character can run left and right. Holding down the jump key in conjunction with a direction button causes a jump either left or right.

Travelling around *Myla Di' Kaich* is a bit awkward as seemingly solid platforms are prone to collapsing beneath you and apparently harmless ground often bursts into agitated life. There are often many lifts on the different screens and, though sometimes unpredictable, they are quite easy use. A word of warning, if a lift travels too high with you on top it's possible to be crushed beneath a platform above. It's also quite easy to unwittingly stand underneath a descending lift and get converted to yucky splat.

Building up a knowledge of the map is quite important, it's all too easy to walk through a hole in the floor and fall to your doom. It's a pretty of strange game really, but then with a name like *Myla Di'Kaich* what do you expect.

CRITICISM

● **" To say the least I wasn't very impressed with this one, it seems to have many of the qualities of early platform games including the lack of playability and addictiveness. I think it would have been greatly improved if the graphics were less colourful and larger, as they are however, it is difficult to play for any length of time as the garish colours and small characters make playing very hard on the eyes. As for the game itself I think we have all had enough *JSW* look-alikes to last us a lifetime. "**

● *" Global seem to have got the idea that if you can't think up a title for a game, why not call it something no one will understand: how about* Myla Di' Kaich*? (Only joking chaps, of course I know what it means — I think). Anyway, enough of this frivolity. If I hadn't been told about the game, and just shown a screen shot or something, I would have said it was a follow up to Wet Set Jelly. But no, the graphics are miniscule, none more than 2-4 character blocks but they are well animated all the same. The screens don't have names, which makes it difficult to remember routes and things. If you're one of those cut-off-from-society people still playing* JSW*, then wake up because you might like this. If you threw that game away twelve months ago, stay well clear of this one. "*

● " After reading about supermarkets and rubber band motor drives in the inlay, I thought Global Software might at least have come up with something original. How wrong I was. I thought maze games were dead and finished, but apparently some companies can still make money with them. *Myla Di'Kaich* is no different from any other platform game, and remind me a lot of *Farenheit 3000* from the Firebird range of cheapies. You are a very small jetman surrounded by, amongst other things, baby jetmen and some of the nasties you meet are quite well animated — especially the opening pyramids. Everything is much too small, however, and the lack of size combined with single colours means the graphics don't have an astounding effect. Unfortunately, this is a very plain game on a pretty dead subject where virtually every possibility has been explored — except perhaps for mentioning supermarkets in the inlay. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: alternate on 2nd and 3rd rows for left and right, bottom row to jump
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, and simple layout
Use of colour: messy
Graphics: well animated, but tiny
Sound: poor tune and effects
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 50
General rating: Aged format provides nothing new and the low price doesn't make up for the fact.

Use of computer	**45%**
Graphics	**49%**
Playability	**44%**
Getting started	**46%**
Addictive qualities	**41%**
Value for money	**47%**
Overall	**44%**

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CAVES OF DOOM

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Robert Sansom**

The evil Lord of Doom is a bit averse to strangers snooping around his planet. Understandable really, but when most people would tell the odd explorer or two to shove off, this guy casts intruders into a pit and leaves them to die. He's not called the **evil** Lord of Doom for nothing you know.

Oblivious to the nasty nature of the planet's master, you decide to do a bit of exploring on Doom. Predictably enough, you are captured by the denizens of the evil Lord, and are left to die, deep within the bowels of the planet. It's all a bit perturbing really.

After going through heavy bouts of feeling sorry for yourself it soon becomes apparent that the best plan is to try and escape back to the surface where your rocket ship awaits. Obviously it's not that easy. Numerous sentries are stationed around the Dark Lord's underground citadel. Some are intelligent, homing in on your body heat, while others patrol mindlessly along their designated paths. Be warned, a sentry's touch is deadly.

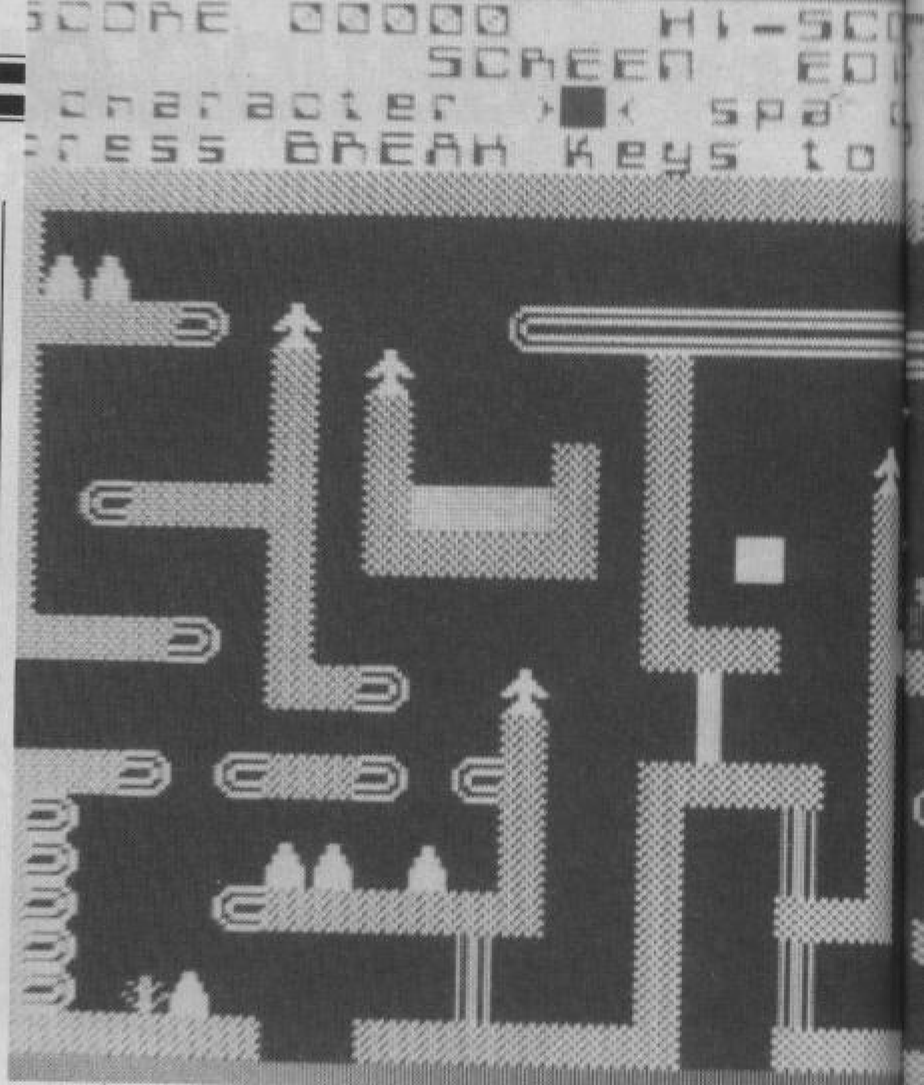
Locked doors bar your route to freedom, blocking the main passageways back to the surface. There are five different types of door, and each needs to be opened with a key which matches the colour of its paintwork. Keys are to be found knocking about the citadel and are picked up by flying over them. One of the keys is a composite object, split into three pieces; all three parts must be collected before the key works. Seven bits to collect in all.

You get around the caves using your jet powered backpack. When you fly, the whirr of jet thrusters resonates around the cave. The only real drawback it has, is that it's not very economic on fuel. Luckily, ample amounts of this wonder mixture can be found and collected within the subterranean caverns. Strolling over a purple fuel canister tops up your tanks and moves the bar gauge at the top of the screen to the right. Economy driving — trogging along on foot — doesn't use any fuel, but it is a little slow and you are more likely to get totalled by attacking aliens when you're on foot.

Each cave occupies the lower part of the screen with the upper area reserved for important information relating to status, lives remaining and score. There is usually an exit on at least one wall of each cave, and as you fly/walk through it another screen flips into view. Dodging the mindless nasties successfully comes with practice, but the homing baddies present more of a problem. They look like white stick men and zoom towards your location with a frightening fervour. You have eight lives to start with, and some quick learning is called for . . . Your man is unarmed, so the nasties have to be avoided rather than killed, and points are awarded for progress.

Those of you having difficulty with certain screens, or the game as a whole will no doubt leap into the editor supplied. This most handy of utilities permits the playing area supplied with the game to be remodelled, or completely destroyed and rebuilt. In edit mode, the cursor remains stationary while the landscape scrolls behind it. Keying 0 deposits a building block selected from the menu of 255 components under the cursor.

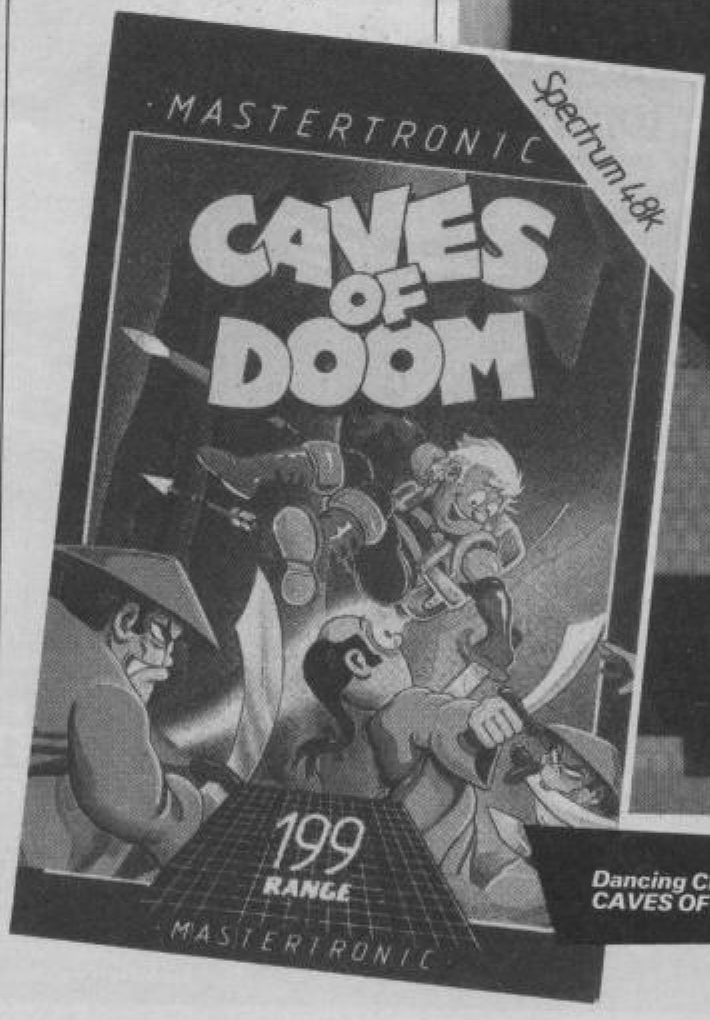
The editor gives access to an infinite number of DIY games, and is perhaps the ultimate cheat mode. But are you sprite enough to cheat death in *Caves of Doom* the honest way?

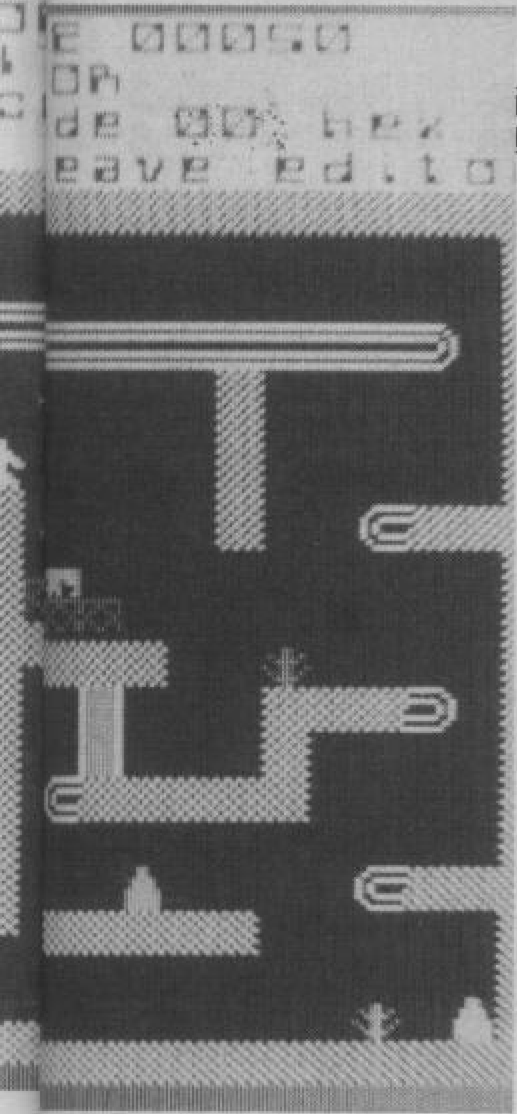


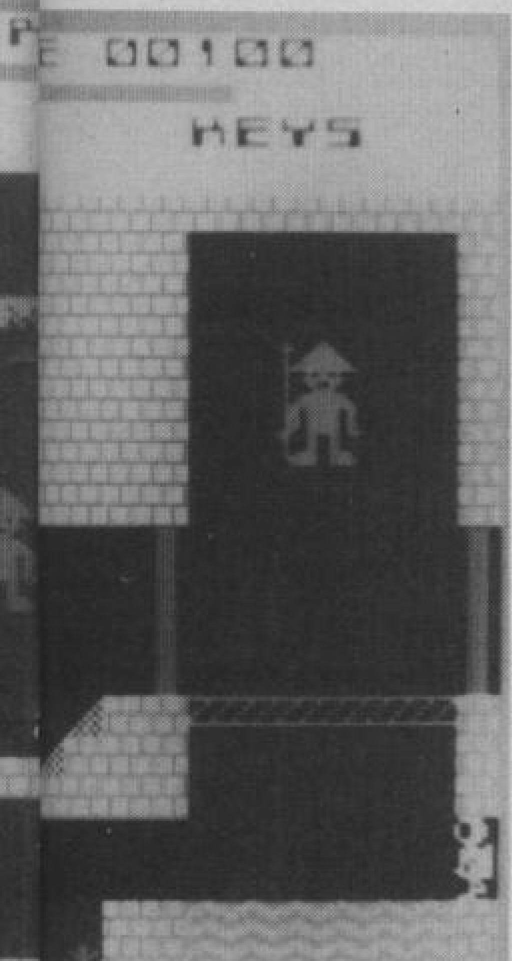
Inside the editor in CAVES OF DOOM from Mastertronic. If you can't get through a screen you can always edit the awkward bits out!



Dancing Chinamen do their best to block your progress in CAVES OF DOOM







CRITICISM

● " Caves of Doom **is a pretty good platform game with straightforward but good graphics. There's not much sound — a little more would have made for more cheerful play. A fast, jolly platform game which I found fun. I enjoyed the editor, too — it added an extra dimension to the basic game. You should get your money's worth of fun with this one.** "

● " *Although* Caves *is not bad, maybe it would have been better value in combination with another, similar program on the tape for £1.99. The cave designer is nice and easy to use but it doesn't add to the game. I found it did the opposite: instead of enjoying the frustration at a given point in the game, it's all to easy to edit out the problem altogether. Generally, this is not an excellent program, but better than average.* "

● " A couple of years ago I would have been really impressed with this game as it has lots of screens and even a screen editor. Nowadays, it's below average, and even for a cheapo game it's not brilliant. Playing the game is fairly straightforward: just fly around and collect the fuel pods for points and try to get all the keys. Graphically, *Caves of Doom isn't good, the characters are small, undetailed and jerky and the backgrounds are too colourful and often garish. Nevertheless, there is a strange sort of addiction about this game — you'll play it when you're bored with everything else and then get really addicted to it. The screen editor is very strange and takes time to get used to, but once you do, it's very useful.* "

COMMENTS

Control keys: O left, P right, A up, Z down, G start game, E to edit, 5, 6, 7, 8 to move cursor in edit mode, J/K backwards/forwards through character set
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor, Fuller
Keyboard play: responsive, well laid out
Use of colour: a bit garish at times
Graphics: simplistic
Sound: jetpack noise only
Skill levels: one
Screens: 40
General rating: a fun little game

Use of computer	65%
Graphics	49%
Playability	58%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	57%
Value for money	62%
Overall	58%

2112

Producer: **Design Design**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Graham Stafford and Stuart Ruecroft**

Apart from being a thirteen year old rock album, *2112 AD* is the title of Des Des's latest game for the simple reason that it is set in that year. London, in the scenario, is not the fair (?) city we all know today but in fact a massive computing complex dedicated to running the entire country. Everybody is free from participating in menial tasks as robots have been designed to do all the dirty work. Everything is tickety-boo until some naughty hackers go and play around with the system.

Now the supposedly benevolent computer is turning into a digital dictator, using the robots it designed for peaceful purposes to impose its reign of terror. Your task is to locate all the pieces of a Switching Code and insert them into the computer in the correct places. Ten of these are scattered around the complex. You have an electronic companion called Poddy to help you achieve your quest.

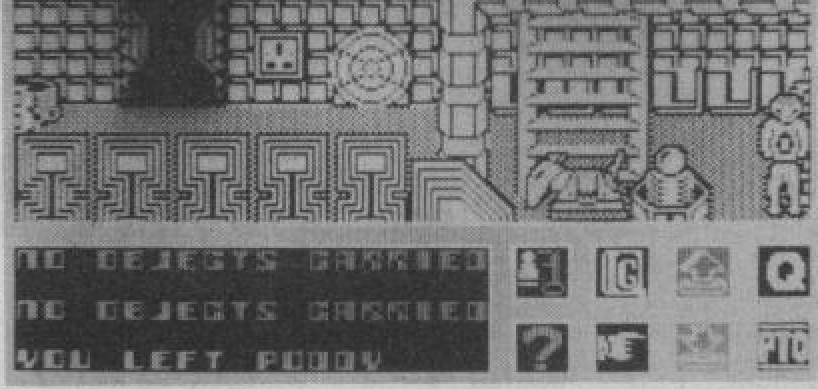
The game uses icons for control. These are displayed at the bottom right corner of the screen. There isn't enough room for all of these to be displayed at once so selecting a particular icon changes all those currently shown. To the left of the icon display area is a scrolling message screen used for both game and help messages.

Apart from a Help icon which sends information to the message window when selected, icons allow the control of Poddy, the carrying and use of miscellaneous items collected during the game, the ability to check the current status of both man and dog (or modify each within certain limits) and game options such as joystick selection. Double clicking an icon returns you to direct control of your character on the screen.

Graphics are somewhat akin to those employed in such games as *Tir Na Nog* as they use hi-res single colour graphic backgrounds upon which the characters move about. The main difference is that each room is a different screen. The characters may also walk into the foreground so the screen scrolls up and down to a degree. As the characters may also move behind objects on the screen, any that are likely to seriously obscure the view, disappear at opportune moments.

Most of the other characters in the game tend to be mechanical in nature. As these are con trolled by the malfunctioning computer, the most harmless looking robots have a habit of hampering you at every opportunity. Items may be placed in their way to stop them or if you have the first aid kit, you can often rectify any minor damage they inflict. For effective control of Poddy, he must remain within the immediate vicinity and this tends to slow you down somewhat until you become accustomed to controlling two characters. Also Poddy must be kept fully powered. There are various power points enabling this but if you neglect him, his usefulness inevitably suffers. Likewise, the main character must be kept fit so it becomes necessary to keep an eye open for food.

The game begins in the central location where the Code ROMs have to be placed. To ensure that they are being collected in the right order, when one is found it should be dropped in this room. If it appears in the special cells it is correct. If it falls to the floor, it has been returned too soon. It doesn't take long for things to get complicated.



Ahh! You've left Poddy behind. 2112AD from Design Design

CRITICISM

● **" This game resembles Cuchulainn's adventure sagas in only the most superficial respects. It has some good original ideas and an interesting approach to gameplay. Although it takes a while to get used to the idea of dealing with two characters and a series of special function icons, once this familiarity is acquired, it becomes possible to get totally immersed within the game. However, the pace of action is such that unless you found the speed of *Marsport* satisfactory, you may well decide that this is a little slow for your tastes. Personally, I found it enjoyable to be able to appreciate the animation whilst dealing with the thought provoking problems the game provides. "**

● *" Oh dear! I'm the sole hope for humanity — well the UK anyway — in this game. DD have made a good job of the icons and the animation and scrolling are both very smooth. The lack of sound made a big impression on me, though why, I'm not sure. I don't think this one holds any major surprises, but it is better than the standard, run of the mill game. I think Graham Stafford could have done better, because the storyline has a lot of potential. It's the first Design Design game I haven't been mad on. The graphics, despite being smooth, don't seem to have anything over those of* On the Run. *You'll have to pull your socks up Design Design — I wouldn't want my favourite software house getting a bad name.*

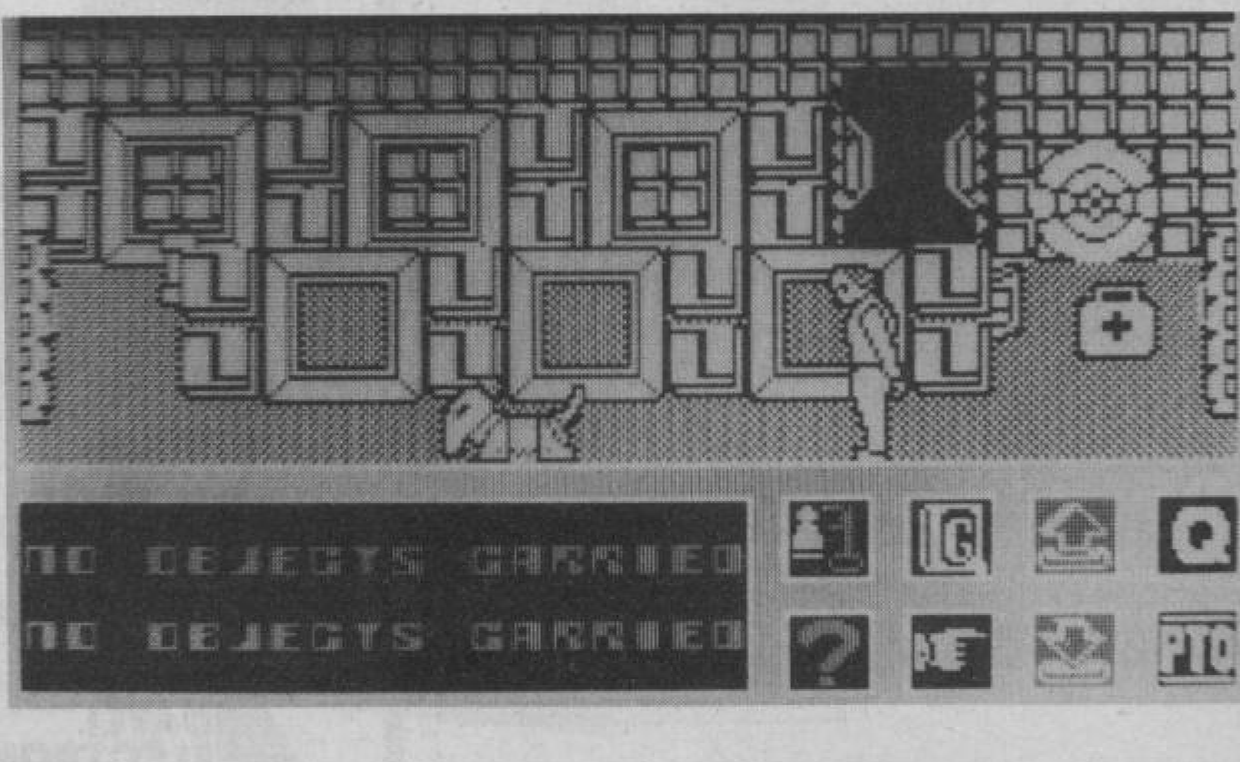
● " I first saw *2112AD* screens a few months ago from a very shy and retiring Graham Stafford and couldn't wait for the finished version with a robotised Poddy. the first thing that struck me was the way the screen was set up — a sort of cross between Filmation I and II, which creates a tremendous effect with smooth movements and detailed animated characters. Everything, except moving, is done via icons which are large, detailed and easily recognisable. All the things you can pick up could come in useful, and my problem was deciding what to keep and what to give to Poddy. (Don't forget, if you give him too much to carry, he slows down). Lots of pretty graphics and great games with little sound seems to sum up Design Design — and it works most times. One of my favourite games to date."

COMMENTS

Control keys: selectable layouts
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Cursor
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: limited on screen but effective on icons
Graphics: very good resolution and animation
Sound: none
Skill levels: 1
General rating: good animated adventure.

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	85%
Playability	82%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	81%
Value for money	83%
Overall	83%

With your faithful robo-friend Poddy you stroll through the cityscape in 2112AD, a game from Graham Stafford of Design Design



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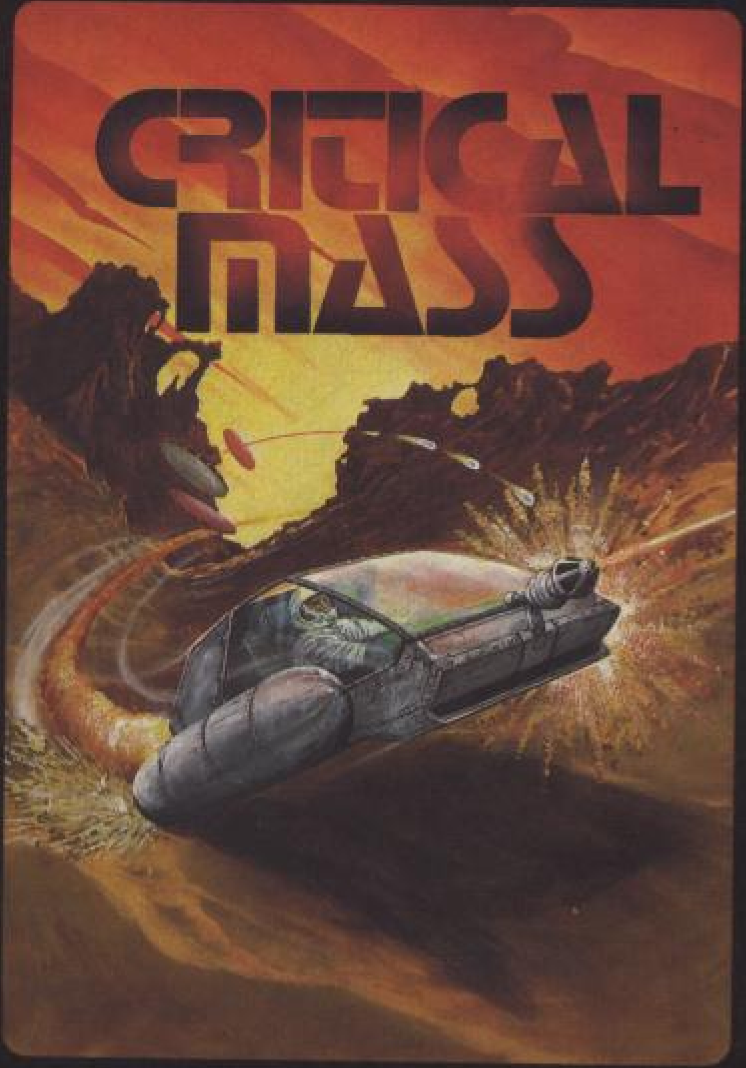
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CRITICAL MASS (Arcade)

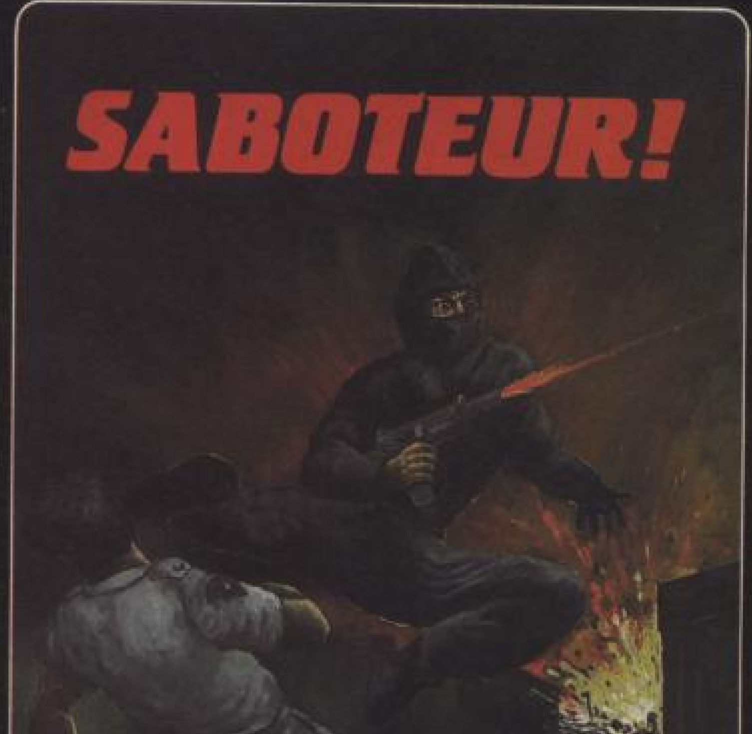
Spectrum 48k £8.95
Commodore 64 £8.95
Amstrad 464/6128 £8.95

An outlying system of the Terra Federation has set up an advanced anti-matter conversion plant on a centrally positioned asteroid to supply the local colonists with energy. A surprise attack by alien forces has successfully overcome the asteroid's defences and the aliens are now threatening to self-destruct the power plant unless the colonists offer an unconditional surrender. The self-destruction process would effectively turn the power plant into a massive black hole that would wipe out the entire planetary system along with a number of nearby stars. Unconditional surrender offers an equally horrific prospect. Your mission is to infiltrate the enemy position and disable the anti-matter plant before the aliens achieve CRITICAL MASS.

"This is the biz!......The graphics and playability of this game are superb, making it well worth the money."







SABOTEUR (Martial Arts Arcade Adventure)

Spectrum 48k £8.95
Amstrad 464/6128 £8.95
Commodore 64 £8.95

You are a highly skilled mercenary trained in the martial arts. You are employed to infiltrate a central security building which is disguised as a warehouse. You must steal a disk that contains the names of all the rebel leaders before its information is sent to the outlying security stations. You are working against the clock, both in getting to the disk, and in making your escape. You must enter the building from the sea by rubber dinghy, and will then only be able to leave by the helicopter on the roof. You will have to find your way around the warehouse, making use of the guards' own weapon supplies in your struggle through overwhelming odds.

"Saboteur is without a doubt one of the best arcade games I've seen for a long time and a welcome departure from the plethora of licenced/endorsed product that the industry seems to currently favour. Recommended."





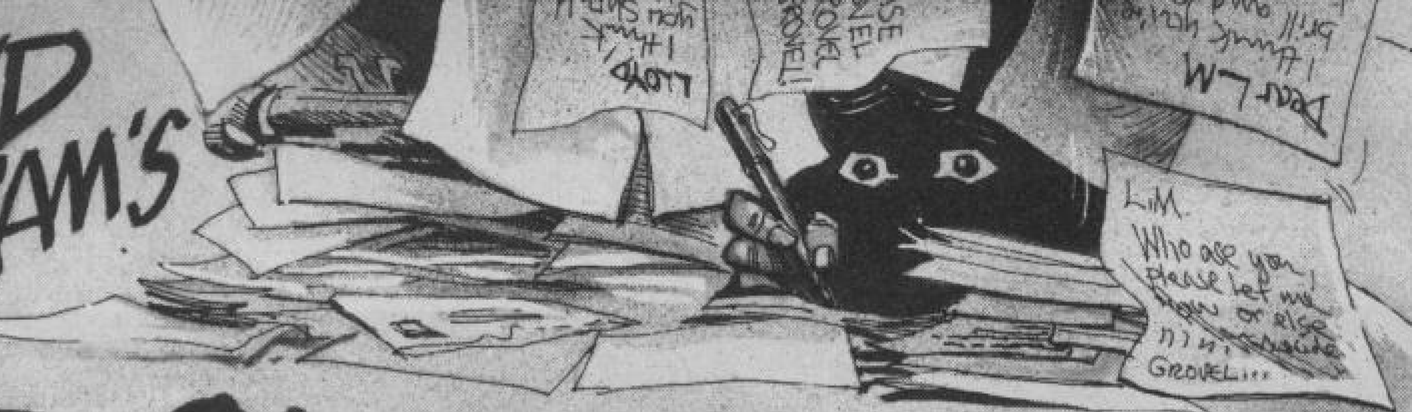
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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



As everyone who has known me for a long time knows only too well, I am one of the world's most uncomplaining people, but even I have to say that I've been having a trying time of it lately. It's the snow you see, it makes cycling down the hill into work such a chore, and going home is even worse. Also, it didn't escape my eagle eye that a certain Playing Tips person had moved my desk further away from the gas mantle so he could keep warmer in the office. So it is with shivering fingers that I open this month's mail to find attacks on CRASH for going downhill, uphill, sideways and every which way in fact. Quite an interesting bunch! It's getting to that interesting point where for every letter complaining about something or other, there's another answering the complaint. I think I'll go into retirement and let you lot get on with it (perhaps Robin Candy will take over — he's good at sorting mail, that's what he was initially hired to do). Anyway, enough of this maundering and onto this month's megaletta . . .

LONG TIME PASSING . . .

Dear Lloyd,
Aaargh! (echoing down a bottomless pit). What has happened to those good old, fast, useful, and hated TURBOLOADERS? Where are they now? WHY have they disappeared? I'll tell you why; it's because you printed endless streams of letters condemning (put that one in your dictionary of miniscule words, good eh?) — condemning turboloaders. Honestly now, admit whether you have had so many problems with loading programs which are turboloaders. How many letters do you get praising turboloaders? Probably not many as most people do not write to say how good something is, but how bad it is. Also praising a good idea is not controversial is it? I have had no (zero, nothing, o, zilch) problems with turboloaders.

There is an argument both for and against turboloaders.
FOR: — The average loading time is almost halved, surely a good thing (less waiting more time playing).
AGAINST: — When hacking into a program it is much harder because a new loader must be written in machine code so that the code can be accessed. As you are not supposed to cheat when you are playing a game it is not really a problem. Although it is sometimes more enjoyable to play a game with infinite lives. However when a hacker breaks into a program he (or she) does it for pleasure. It must be satisfying to conquer a turboloader. And you cannot say that turboloaders have restricted your giving out pokes because often you have given them out in the same issue as the reviews and have received them before the review.

So now is the time to speak out in favour of turboloaders because they disappearing a la *Nightshade* and *Robin of the Wood*. Please print this letter if only so that other readers can write in, preferably in favour of turboloaders — you must get them (I've sent three). I know that some companies use poor loaders but if SPEEDLOCK became the industry standard (as NOVALOAD is on the Commodore 64) then things would be great.

It's highly unlikely, as this is my sixth letter, that it will be LOM, but yours in favour of not waiting a long time for programs to load (eg TURBOLOADERS), **Simon Shepherd, Sheiff Hutton, York**

O Ye of little faith! There you go, Simon, letter of the month — sixth time lucky!

How right you are, most people write to complain, rarely to praise. Are you trying to suggest that the 'dictatorship' of new devices like Lenslok has now made turboloaders look positively 'democratic'? It is strange that the streams of letters I received on the subject mostly concentrated on the protection angle and how in their greed to slow down piracy, software houses were losing custom because of the recalcitrant (Lloyd Mangram's Long Word Dictionary) turboloaders; few picked on the advantages of faster loading. As you say, NOVALOAD on the 64 is virtually taken for granted because of its advantages to the games player.

However, this is a forum for CRASH readers — your every word is my column, and I think it's downright unfair of you to blame me personally for the disappearance of the good old turboloader! You should thank your lucky stars that I'm as nice as I am — the games of your choice are on their way . . .
L(bring back the dinosaurs)**M**

GETTING TOGETHER

Dear Sir,
Subject *Tomahawk*.
After purchasing this game I have come to one conclusion — it would be a great benefit for the buying public if graphic technics could be copied from other programs, in this case *Tomahawk* and *Combat Lynx*, then *Tomahawk* would have been a mega smash; Lorries; tanks etc were detailed in *Combat Lynx* plus rolling hills.

It is in my opinion that if the Software houses got together on games of a similar theme then we the buying public and the software houses concerned would benefit.

Tomahawk — graphic rubbish except for the controls plus T.A.D.S. A nice touch but having to sort out targets from a series of dots is frustrating. As I stated if Durell and Digital Integration had got together on this one I think we would have had a mega Hit CRASH Smash. And that's something the buying public would welcome especially at the price of £9.95.

As for the LensLok, it took me 35 minutes, 5 reloads, 80% eye strain and 80% guess work to start the game.

But thanks to my Mirage Microdriver I can put the LensLok in the bucket — I transferred it immediately via Mirage Microdriver to cartridge and promptly gave the game plus LensLok to my young nephew.

Yes 'nephew', for I am 50 years old (Veteran) hooked on Spectrum Games and in my opinion most reviews are done in magazines by people who don't have to spend hard earned money to purchase games. It's a different story when you weigh the cost of the article or game against the amount of enjoyment one gets from playing same — as I have stated, if software houses with similar ideas got together then as in the case of *Combat Lynx* and *Tomahawk* then we would have something worth £9.95, a lot of money for a kid delivering papers to afford same in my opinion.

Please print and oblige.
J Reekie, Oakley, Fife
I think you're asking something akin to Russia and the USA getting together on the space race unfortunately. Besides, different software houses have different ideas of what they want to achieve, not to mention the complexities of splitting the profits afterwards!
LM



PRICKLY

Dear Lloyd,
Seeing as I am taking the trouble to write to you, you'd better look at it, or I'll set my dangerous hedgehog on you. As I'm writing to you, it means I've got a mega-serious complaint to make.

Well then, remember how way back in the September issue there was a *Nodes of Yesod* competition which involved making a map of it? I had only just bought the game, and so I decided to enter the competition.

After 3 weeks of work, every day apart from about three, it was finished just about a week before the judging day. As it used 6 sheets of A4 size paper, the Post Office (they must be aliens) forced me to leg the map in a massive envelope and then pay postage and packaging rates as well!

Since I wanted my map back, I included another massive envelope, adorned with (beautiful) stamps, and finally sent off the map.

Eagerly did I wait until the November issue, and — woe's me — did not win, even though I and many of my friends thought it very good. (Modesty is showing through there). Never mind — thought I, at least I'll get the map back — so give it here, even though you probably couldn't be bothered to return it.

Now that's out of the way, a few other points. *Monty on the Run* was a CRASH Smash, but is too hard and shouldn't have been. You made it out to be better than it is and *Elite* the greatest ever game should have got 99%.

The Christmas issue is not worth £1.95 as is agreed by many of my friends.

Nevertheless, CRASH is still the best computer magazine on the market, even though you won't publish or probably even read this letter, but you do publish letters written by mental patients.

I'll leave you with this — remember my hedgehogs are straining at their tethers, and are set straight for Ludlow.
Michael Butler, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk

Fortunately (he says, making hand washing motions), Competitions are not my problem. If you ask me, they're a nightmare from beginning to end (administratively), and the worst are the ones with maps. Have you any idea of how much confusion they cause when hundreds arrive, often bigger than the building itself!? No, of course you haven't, because you simply don't care, you just want your map back, you selfish person you, you self-concerned cartographer. Anyway, I hope the Comps minion will have a sort through and see if he can discover your Nodes map (and stamps) and return it. This favour I do you, because, well that's the sort of person I am (not a bit like Robin Candy at any rate). Between you, me and the editorial room doorpost, I thought £1.95 was a bit steep as well, but there was a 16 page colour poster which would normally cost around £2 and there was almost twice as much editorial content as usual.

Monty on the Run may have been difficult, but what's so wrong with that? If a game is too easy to solve there's no fun left, and you can't frighten me with hedgehogs, I have three as pets.
LM

HELP NEEDED

Dear Dr Lloyd,
You have got to help me. I am suffering from a terrible and fatal disease called Crashlaphobia (loss and/or lack of CRASH). In my case it's both. Let me tell you the situation:

A few weeks back my mate borrowed 18 editions of CRASH from me. (Numbers 1 to 18) When I asked for them back all he kept saying was 'I'll get them tomorrow'. He said this for ages, so one day I went to his house and asked for them. (Now he had to find them with me standing on his doorstep didn't he)?

'Come in,' he said, so I did. He searched and searched for hours. I had practically given up hope when he said to his Mum, 'Have you seen the CRASH Magazines, Mum.' She thought for a minute and said, 'Yes, I know where they are.' My face lit up with joy, 'I THREW THEM AWAY!!'

THEM 4 terrible words echoed in my head and wouldn't stop. I fell to the floor and nearly had a heart attack on the spot. My mate searched the bins, but no sign of CRASH was to be found.

Now 2 weeks later, them 4 words are still echoing, I'm losing weight, going a funny colour, can't eat and I think I'm dying. Is there a cure for the disease I've got, if there is, there is only one person in the world who know it and that's you, so please Dr Lloyd could you find a cure for me?
Lee Maker, London N7

My professional advice is to ask Carol nicely for a set of the lost issues (should cost around £16, plus National Health Prescription charges) — ah, but wait! Quite a few of the issues are now out of stock. Oh dear. There's no cure I'm afraid, let's just hope the condition isn't terminal, man (groan). Sorry, Lee, I should bash your friend's mum up — at least it might make you feel better. (Oh gosh, there I go again, next we'll be getting irate mum letters along the lines of causing teenagers to stray from the straight and narrow).
L(I love mums really)M

BLACKMAIL

Dear Lloyd,
I will keep your identity a secret so don't worry, all you have to do is send *Robin of the Wood* to this secret address and your identity will be a secret.
Anon, xxxxx, Cleveland

And I'll set Michael Butler's hedgehogs on to you. Still, for your efforts I'm sending you a copy of Robin of the Candy *to you, anon. When you get it, just poke it a few times and feed it almost raw steak (no veg though, and never, ever feed it after midnight — it's not too keen on water either).*
LM

DOORSTOP HODGES

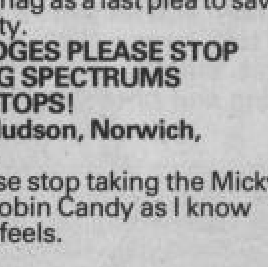
Dear Lloyd
You've got to help me. At school I'm being constantly hassled by my computer studies teacher alias Mr (I think spectrums are doorstops) Hodges.

He is constantly taking the michael out of the Spectrum in lessons. So what? you might think, but in our class I am the only Spectrum owner and the rest are commie 64 owners and acorn electron owners (don't laugh). Once Mr (I hate Spectrums) Hodges has started, I get the micky taken all through the lesson.

So please Mr Mangram could you print the following message in your mag as a last plea to save my sanity.
MR HODGES PLEASE STOP CALLING SPECTRUMS DOORSTOPS!
Glynn Hudson, Norwich, Norfolk
PS Please stop taking the Micky out of Robin Candy as I know how he feels.

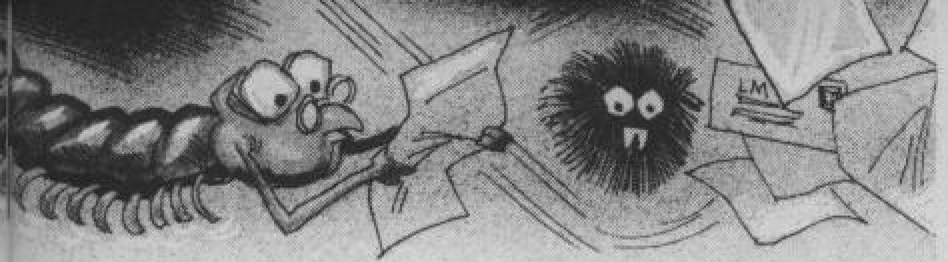
There you go, Glynn. Mr Hodges, get some education in and stop slagging off poor, harmless machines, or I'll set Michael Butler's hedgehogs onto you.

You can't possibly know how Robin feels — he has no feelings to feel with. If you don't believe me — ask him!
LM

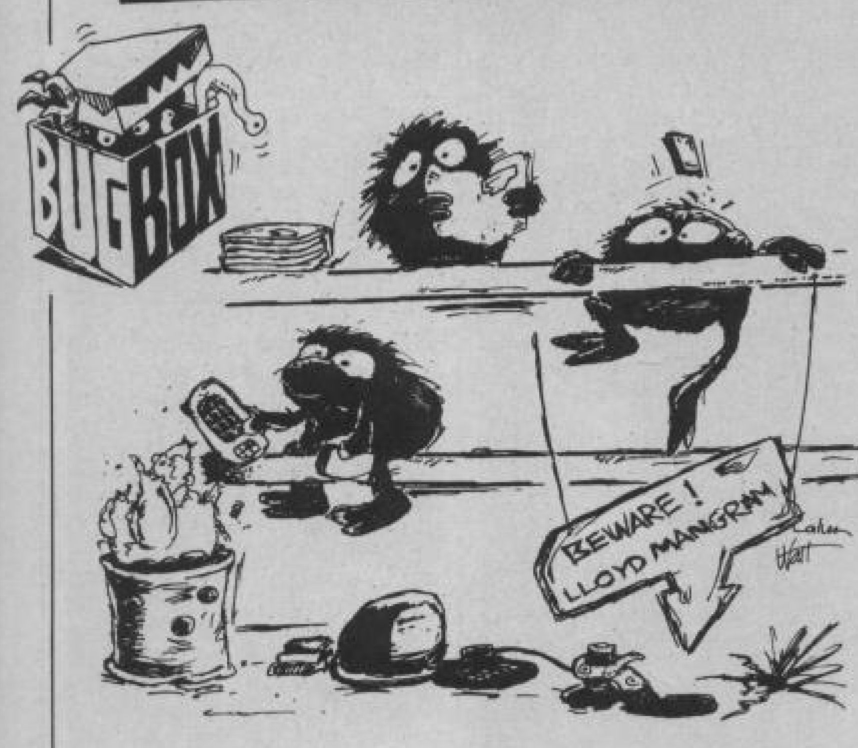


Lots of Bug Boxers reckon Derek has his historical periods mixed up, but I thought this snappy cartoon strip from MARK BEAUMONT (aka 'Bomber') or Worsley, Manchester, summed up the problem quite nicely!





CALUM WATT (nice name), sent in this selection of very well drawn bugs making hay while the sun shines — or something like that anyway.



OVERHYPED

Dear Lloyd,
I have been computing for a long time since the time when you could find a new POKE every month in *Your Computer*, save up to buy Artic's *Galaxions* or ask your friend round for a game of 'through the wall.'

In the days when 'sending off for a game' meant receiving a printout of 1024 hex digits to type in, who could imagine that, one day, four or five years later, the software industry would be as it is today?

Anyway — back to the point. Reading another magazine yesterday I gathered that Gallup, the compilers of many 'top 30' charts have decided to split the chart into 'mainstream' (ie expensive and good programs) and 'budget' (ie rubbish under five pounds which people only buy because the titles are cheap). Well — 3 years ago, unless a game was REALLY special, no — absolutely NO — games would cost more than £5.95. Why have the prices gone up? People buy more software now — so the price should have gone down.

The answer to the question is — hype. Ocean took NINE pages in February's CRASH — US GOLD — part of the same empire — took FIVE and Imagine — also owned by Ocean — took THREE. It is not only Ocean, but they are a good example. They advertise their games for £7.95 or £6.95 spending thousands on glossy adverts. I don't know how much a full-colour page in CRASH costs, but I know that it is enough.

How can small companies, with games just as good, compete with this? Games such as *Spellbound* are worth ten *Rambos* or *Eurekas*. The only companies who have the right to sell expensive software are those whom you know will give you a good game. Level 9, Melbourne House or Ultimate (not including *Nightshade*).
J Marsh, Billericay, Essex

Hmmm — Galaxions is going back a bit, but I'm sure The Hobbit *(£14.95) and Valhalla* (similar) are around the same time. True, most games never cost more than £5.95, but that was, as you say, a few years ago and inflation does hit most things. Programmers have become much cleverer, games take longer to develop, the ideas have to be better (arguable whether they really ARE better perhaps), and programmers are now 'professionals' in the sense that they really earn a living that way and don't just churn out BASIC games for a bit of spare cash. Quite obviously, all this costs more. On the balance side, there are now some excellent budget games at prices that would have been unthinkably cheap a few years ago. Your paraphrasing of Gallup's chart split intentions is a bit unfair I think. Comments on this from anyone else?

As to the big companies' advertising policies, there's not a lot I can say. Of course some smaller ones are going to produce games as good as and better than Ocean — that's only to be hoped. But we live in a commercial world and advertising is essential. It isn't as though Ocean or US Gold take the numbers of pages you quote for ONE game, and I'm sure they end up paying the same page price as anyone else. The point is that between them they put out a lot of games, hence a lot of ads.
LM



GOING DOWNHILL?

Dear Lloyd,
I totally agree with Tom Buchanan, Aberdeenshire (Issue 24) with regard to the decline of your once excellent magazine. Although CRASH is still by far the best computer magazine currently available, it is in danger of becoming the *Smash Hits* of the computer world, and has become far too childish. Bugbox is just an embarrassment — can you please get rid of it and bring back the Oli-bugs.

The moaning does not stop here, though. What on earth has happened to software companies of late? Even though the standard of most software has rapidly increased, prices have soared to CBM 64 levels — obviously a trend started by Sir Ultimate, who used to be the greatest software company in the universe. Their last game (how can such a large company release just two games in a year?), along with the most recent Imagine, Bug Byte, Gremlin Graphics, Hewson consultants, Mikro-Gen and Software Projects games, are all pathetic compared with their previous achievements. The only decent companies around now, seem to be Bubble Bus, Melbourne House and Elite (who used to be the worst software company in the universe), although they insist on charging extortionate prices as well.

It is no wonder that so many software companies have gone under.

Finally, my last point is that I feel the future of computer software, and Spectrum software in particular, lies not with the Budget games, such as the Mastertronic and Firebird games, although these can, sometimes, be very good value for money, but with software writing 'teams' such as Denton Designs, Platinum Productions and the Melbourne House team, the days are almost gone when an individual writer could produce a decent game (with the odd exception, such as Stephen Crow's *Starquake*, the greatest game for the Spectrum ever written), and the sooner software companies realise this, the better.
Iain Pardoe (15), Frimley, Surrey

Strong words indeed, Iain. I wonder how many other readers agree with your points. I think CRASH has a long way to go before turning into Smash Hits *somehow (although I know the management wouldn't mind their sales, some 750,000 an issue)!*
LM

CLEAN UP TIME

Dear Lloyd Mangram,
I am writing on behalf of the computer pacifists to tell you our cause, and to warn you!

Our group consists of twelve members (sadly all boys); all owning different computers. Our objective is: No rivalry between computer owners. No violent, blow-em-up computer games. No violent evil, sadistic computer mags. No games that involve pounding your computer to death eg *DTD*. No computer games, with an out-right winner, to cause hardship. No gore or sex in mags and games. No hi-score charts in mags to cause jealousy. No ugly pictures in mags eg Derek Brewster and Robin Candy. No ugly bugs and your letter pages.

At this moment, you, who are reading think we are soft wallies. Not if you look into the depth of our course.
Our members are:
Gregory Eyone - ZX 81 User.
Martin Biddle - Commodore User.
Sean Blair - Spectrum User.
Dom Clarke - Commodore User.
Liam Winer - Spectrum User.
Brian Armstrong - Spectrum User.

HALL OF SLIME. Then this month I opened your Christmas CRASH, guess what confronted me, *Friday (the bloody) Thirteenth*. Also somewhere in your pages, there was a porno Steve 'perverted' Turner with his smug look and he was reading *Mayfair*. So CRASH better start cleaning their act or you will lose your readers; and I am sure plenty others.
Gregory Eyone, Portsmouth
PS I know this will not be published because its a very condemning letter.

Go on then, clean up the world of computer games, sounds like your course ends in something really sludgy to me, a load of sloshy bytes with no bite in them. Toothless games without good clean fun in them. I'm saddened to think you've been taken in by the wimps party. Still, perhaps another dose of CRASH will solve the problem! Look what the world of computer games has given us — once upon a time teachers used to say a very different activity made you go blind — now, according to latest research, it's looking at a VDU all day. At CRASH, we're working for a cleaner, better world blah, blah, blah . . .
LM

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you about the price of software. 'Oh! Boring!' I hear you cry, well I would like to give you a new angle. It is possible to have a decent sized software collection without breaking the bank. No, I don't mean just buying budget games. My own software collection is worth £519.83. That's a saving of almost £180!

Put another way, it's 2 interface ones and a Spectrum Plus keyboard. I have managed to make this saving by buying from the various shops who advertise software in magazines at substantial savings over the recommended prices.

Most of the shops have the newest titles in as they're released and all the shops I have dealt with delivered my order within 2 weeks. If all the people who wrote to CRASH about the high price of software and the amount of magazine advertising, actually bothered to read the adverts, they might find that they can save some money.

I have yet to come across any 'Budget' shop that sells pirated software, indeed most send software which is still shrink wrapped in cellophane. This goes to prove that if you 'shop around' you can pick up some real bargains. I have, for instance, bought games like *Zzoom* for £1.99!
Jon Rose, Bognor Regis, W Sussex

Shopping around has always been a good idea — you can make some savings through CRASH Mail Order as well (okay Carol — got the plug in, right)? I'm not surprised you found Zzoom for such a low price, most of the old Imagine stock still around in shops is likely to be sold off cheaply.
LM



Sorry I didn't get round to your letter, NELSON SANDWICH, from Merseyside, but the drawing at the bottom caught my eye!

GETTING CHEAPER

Dear CRASH,
I am writing to you concerning the price of your magazine. Ah . . . Ah, before you throw me away I must add that I am also writing to praise the fact that CRASH has actually fallen in price over the last year or so. Remarkable eh? What is more, I will prove my theory.

In the July issue of 1984 there was a total of 110 pages for 75p. This works out at exactly 0.6818181p per page. OK? The December issue 1985 however, contained 170 pages for a price of 95p. This works out at — wait for it — 0.588235p per page.

Now, if we multiply the price per page of the JULY issue by the number of pages in the DECEMBER 1985 issue the number should equal less than 95p if CRASH has risen in price; over the last year. Shock, horror it doesn't! In fact the price that you end up with after this series of complicated mathmetical calculations is £1.16 — proving that CRASH has fallen in price by 21p over the last year. Oh by the way — in case you even think about raising the price of my most favourite magazine remember that the paper in the JULY 1984 issue is almost twice as thick as the paper in the DECEMBER issue of 1985.

Yours mathmetically,
Steven Marshall, Truro, Cornwall

I did get Elementary and Additional Maths O Level, but that was only because I was ill in bed suffering with mumps at the time and the adjudicators made allowances for my sad condition, so I'll take your word for it, Steven!
LM

QUARK QUARK

Dear Lloyd,
As a subscriber to CRASH, I feel that the micro-computer industry is internecine to the lentitude of the lithontriptic misenthylememe and the prometheatory of some regions of the monadelphous aureolement to the relative quantity that is apposite to the denouement releases the major quasipassementary.

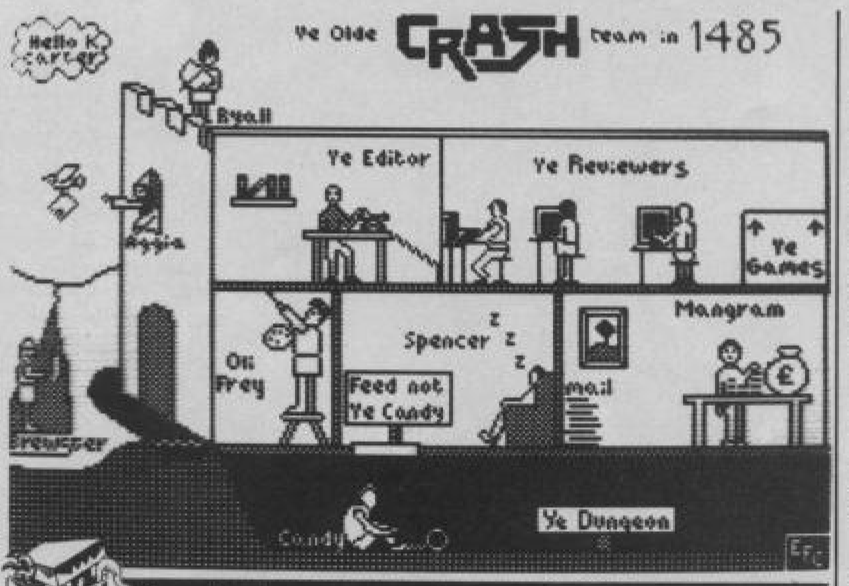
Yours interstitially
James Brooks, Harrogate, N Yorkshire

Uebervollkommene reichverbluemte Ersatzsprache ist ausserordentlich voelkerverfremdend — as you might find. (If in doubt check it with Lloyd Mangram's Long German Word Dictionary — out soon). Of course, you might think this is a load of Kant.


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Sorry that the cassette parted company from the letter, all I know is that this screen was sent in by a lady.

LENSLOKED OUT

Dear Sir,
As a new reader to your mag there are some points I would like to put over to you. I enjoy a great deal reading the letters in the Forum, but certainly do not enjoy reading such rubbish about who is better than what other mags are saying. Rubbish such as this, not my letter, should be put where it belongs. The FORUM is a platform for people to speak, not a toilet to deposit things in.

Now that that's out of the way I would like to talk about an article by Simon Goodwin in the Xmas Special.

I can sympathise with computer software companies wanting to protect their games, but, where is Lenslok going to take us? Are we going to have a different lens for each game? As Simon has said it can be difficult to make out some of the letters and it does NOT work too well on a 26" screen. If you lose the lens, as happened to me, the game is lost, at least until you get another. When I lost the lens I promptly phoned Firebird and explained to them the situation, no problem they said, send us the whole package and we'll send you a new one. Rather drastic I thought and they said, we need proof of purchase and we can't have you having two lenses.

The article also inferred that companies' best ideas never made their way into code because they would cost more to develop than could be recouped from sales. He wrote: 'Effective software protection, at a low cost, ought to bring down the price of top software.' I think it would have the other effect, the price would go up eg *Elite* costs £14.95. Enough said.

Overall I rate Lenslok fair and certainly don't turn a blind eye to it, but don't let it be the be all and end all.

Lastly if anyone is interested I've reached the status of ELITE and have 870 000 Cr, playing time 5 (constant) weeks.
H Wilding, Dreghorn, Irvin

It seems to me that an awareness of what other computer magazines are saying and commenting on it is fair enough. The quality of the comment may be another matter, however. Lenslok is probably another 'fad' of this industry's understandable obsession with prevention of piracy. Perhaps it hasn't worked out too well for lots of people and that isn't good for Firebird's image or sales — something only they can properly know. I certainly understand them wanting the entire package back before giving you another, they have probably had hundreds, if not thousands, of calls asking for replacement lenses, most of them not bona fide at all! There is a slight misconception in your pricing argument for Elite. *Although Lenslok has undoubtedly added something to the price, the real cost of the game has come from the high royalties paid to the programmers in the first place, plus the Spectrum version development costs. Historically speaking it is far from being the first game at this sort of tag, and arguably offers as much, possibly more, entertainment than, say,* The Hobbit *or* Valhalla *did in their day.*
LM

IN RETROSPECT

Dear Lloyd,
I've just been looking through my old editions of CRASH, and I noticed several points which are still valid a year or two later.

One of the most interesting was the Ultimate Atic/Sabre/Knight/Alien argument, with readers moaning about being ripped off. I thought that the games were all pretty good, and indeed, I had a high opinion of Ultimate until *Nightshade*, which should never have been smashed.

When Odin released *Nodes of Yesod*, I thought we had a new Ultimate on our hands, although I was very disappointed with *Robin Of the Wood*. So, when *Arc of Yesod* was released, I took my Christmas money and paid eight pounds for it. Imagine how I felt when I found it was an exact copy of *Nodes*. And not just a resemblance, it's exactly the same. If companies are in financial trouble, they should bring out new, original games, not replicas, to gain sales.

Further into my old editions, there were the recurring piracy moans. Just think, home music taping has been going on for years, and how many record labels have gone bust because of it? Not a lot. Why should the computer industry be different?

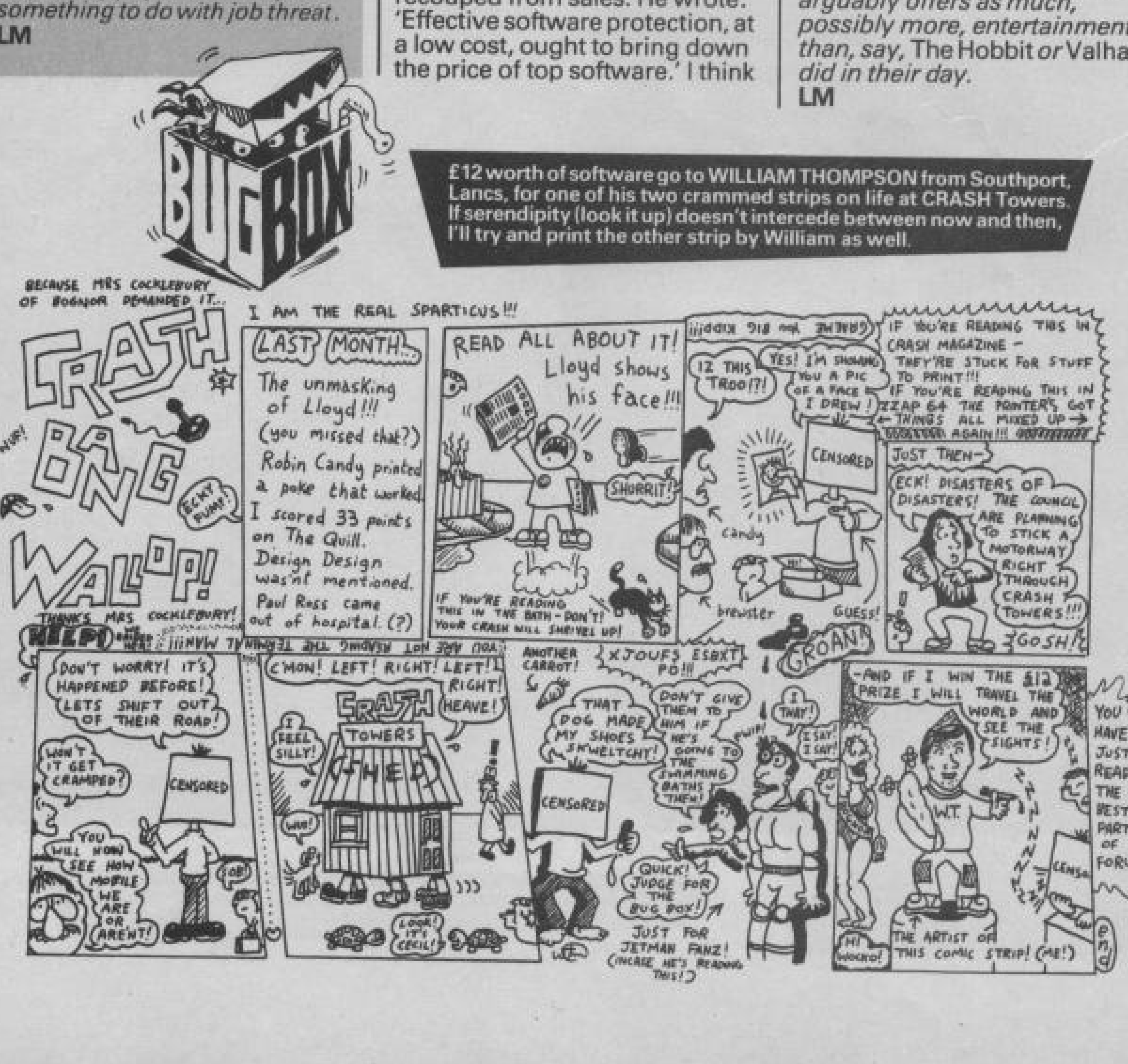
A recent edition earned a letter about childish letters in the Forum, and the disputes between you and Robin Candy. Okay, Candy's a prat, but his tips are useful and there's no need to go on about him. Keep it more adult.

Of course, my final grouse is about the price of the Xmas special. A pound more for a few competitions, a couple of articles and a few adverts (by the way, there aren't too many adverts in your mag, but let's not have too many more). I wouldn't have bought it, but I've got every issue of CRASH, and I don't want to stop now.

So if the industry got off its backside, stopped moaning and gave us some good software, then much happier readers will be writing in to the Forum.
Chris Thomas, Cheadle, Cheshire

Having gone over many such points before, I won't waste space here replying, though I'm sure there are other readers who may want to commment. I've already said something earlier about the Xmas Special cover price — you forgot the delicious 'free' poster — and as for Robin Candy, we're really very dear friends (I won't hear of you calling him a prat), I just happen to hate precocious kids, I don't know why, something to do with Shirly Temple I suppose. I can't help it (my psychiatrist says it's something to do with job threat.
LM

£12 worth of software go to WILLIAM THOMPSON from Southport, Lancs, for one of his two crammed strips on life at CRASH Towers. If serendipity (look it up) doesn't intercede between now and then, I'll try and print the other strip by William as well.





THIS CHAP'S A WALLY

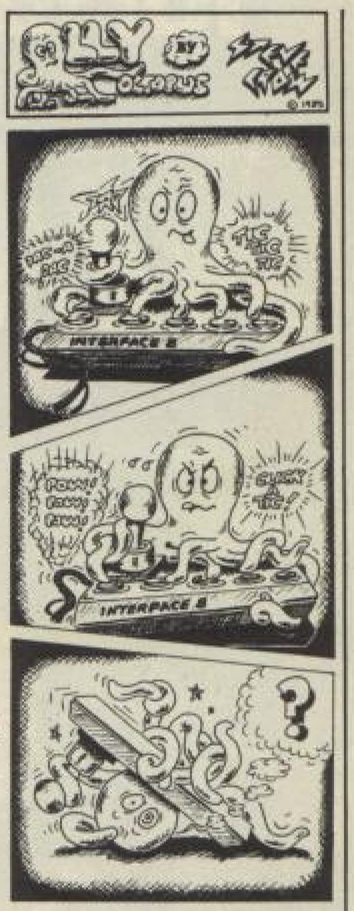
Dear Lloyd,
Before actually getting to the point of this letter I would just like to say that you are definitely not pusillanimous, and although some people say that you are opprobrious, I still like you. (After all these long words I shall have to visit the opthalmologist, or should that be the optometrist)?

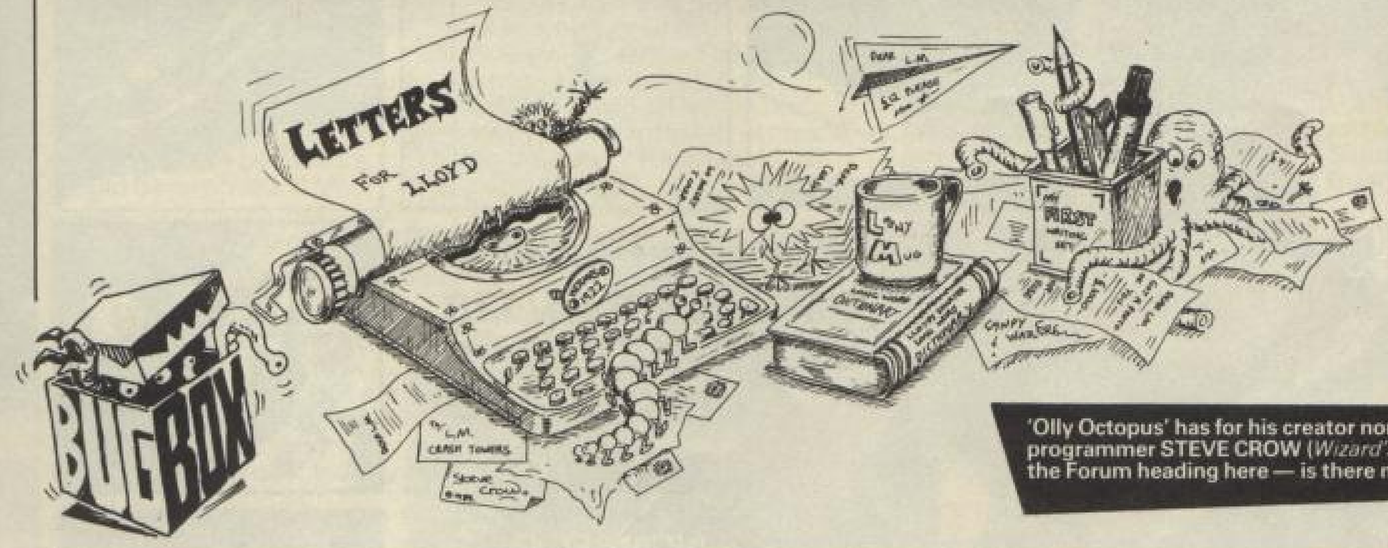
Anyhow, enough posing, on with the letter! (I expect I shall be shouted at by other readers for writing trash and wasting space in the Forum).

Having just read the Christmas Special issue of CRASH, I felt that I had to write and congratulate you on the story of Oli Frey. You certainly were not indolent (there I go again) when researching this story, it's a real tear jerker and no mistake. Now before you go into histrionics shouting, 'THIS CHAP'S A WALLY!' may I just say that I am not usually one for reading soppy media. If any soppy stuff comes my way then there are a few stertorous noises coming from my direction. But this article was so well written. I could not tear myself away from it. (Note the overacting)!

Keep up the good work and don't get indolent.
Stephen Squires, Torquay, S Devon

Peripatetically speaking, the feelings are reciprocal. We all thought it was a three handkerchief job with the collective optical ducts in overwhelming effulgence.
LM





'Olly Octopus' has for his creator none other than the Spectrum programmer STEVE CROW (*Wizard's Lair, Starquake*). He also did the Forum heading here — is there no end to the man's genius?

There's never been a better reason for looking forward to Winter!

WINTER GAMES



Screens from Commodore 64 version of game

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NO, NOT DOWNHILL

Dear Lloyd
I have written about three letters addressed to CRASH before but for some reason, they didn't get posted I am a dedicated reader of CRASH, and have been so since issue six. I am writing this letter to tell you how much I enjoy reading CRASH. CRASH is an absolutely hypier mega-brill magazine; but your Christmas Special was even more so. Well worth £1.95.

Now onto the subject of this mysterious decline in the Forum pages pointed out in T Buchanan's star letter issue 24; 12 pages of Forum! (3 of actual letters mind you); 3 pages of letters is still much much more than you find in most magazines. I don't agree that the cartoons drawn by readers should be removed. If Mr Buchanan believes that these cartoons are a waste of space, then surely he should think that a picture of signior Mangram would be just as much of a waste of space (no offence intended, O Illustrious Lloyd.)

Many of these cartoons are amusing, and if Herr Buchanan doesn't think so, to quote our Maths teacher, 'You must have a weird sense of humour, boy!' Surely Mr Buchanan doesn't think that Paul Mallinson's excellent comic strips are 'foolish and immature.' And do I detect a hint of jealousy in paragraph 3 of Mr Buchanon's letter? 'drawn by a load of infants who think they are really amazing guys who know everybody on the CRASH team . . . pretending to be on familiar terms.'

NOT SO, Buchanan-San. (Jappo).

99.9% of letters printed in CRASH (those figures are just an estimate, mind you. I could be about 0.5 out) are excellent. There is a fair share of serious letters and light-hearted letters. In some unmentionable rags you find about half a page (not 3 pages as in CRASH) of absolute drivel such as, 'I have found a bug m . . .' or even, 'I am writing to tell you that my copy of . . . will not load.'

Think yourself lucky Mr Buchanan. Why should the rich get richer? However, I do agree with Mr Buchanan on the subject of the *Knight Lore/Alien 8* letters (sounds like something from the Fourth Protocol).

Now Lloyd why did your mag print a picture of *G.C. Strongman* on the *Saboteur* review? And do you print CRASH in capital letters on every letter sent in by readers, or do they do it? Never mind, I'll soon find out!

Neil A Kendall, Halifax, W Yorkshire

Thanks for the general sentiments, Neil. I agree, I thought the Buchanan letter was well over the top really, but I feel I shouldn't say too much at the time, being such a nice guy really. Were I RC, I might have said much more, which is why he's only 15 and I'm ——

Actually, I must admit that it's me who puts crash in as CRASH, although the habit is catching of course, and lots of letters come in that way. Mr Capes and Mr Saboteur got a bit muddled up in 'Art' — puzzling when you think how unalike were the pictures. Still, these things do happen occasionally, and as my mum says, if you're going to fall A over T, make it a double somersault.
LM

BLAST

Dear CRASH
I am writing on the subject of the *Blast* compiler which I bought in August. After failing to compile any programs of length I returned it to Oxford Computer Systems. Within two weeks I received a replacement from the company, but this also refused to work. Since then I have sent several letters to the company and they have not replied at all. I have spent £24 on a piece of software which is useless and write to you in the hope of provoking a response from the company.
A Fitzsimmons, Wrexham, Clwyd

Simon Goodwin also had some problems with Blast *when he reviewed it in the September issue — pity you didn't read his review first, he finished with 'not so much a blast, more or a phut.' I would suggest that you send OCS a recorded delivery letter, demanding a reply within seven days. If this fails to elicit any response, you should take the matter up with your local Trading Standards Officer (check with the council or Citizens Advice Bureau).*
LM

VISCERAL SHOCK HORROR

Dear Lloyd,
I'm disgusted. After the recent complaints about the magazine's covers, what do you do? The cover of issue 25 was covered with a multitude of internal organs. I'm a very impressionable twenty-year old, and I was horrified to see such a sight as presented when my magazine landed on my door mat. I'm considering writing to Marg Whitehouse to see what she has to say on the matter.

So come on CRASH pull your socks up. Just leave the cover Blank except for the logo and price to keep us feeble minded people safe from our own imaginations.

Must go now and watch zombie murders in 3078 AD
Simon Lavinter, St Peter Port, Guernsey

The hearts were all properly stuffed and baked, Simon, so there was no risk of salmonella poisoning from handling the cover, not that I expect that would impress the Town Mouse (in-joke reference a la Design Design — check Pink Floyd's Animals *album).*
LM



WAR OF THE WORDS

Dear CRASH
Over a year and a half ago, there was a war of words between CRASH and *Personal Computer Games*, which started in the Editor's notes and articles, and spread to the letters pages of both magazines. It all started in April 1984 edition of *PCG*, in an issue on Steve Turner, written by Andrew Hewson. In this article, CRASH, was misspelt TRASH. In return, CRASH called *PCG* Pukingly Cruddy Garbage; the article then compared CRASH's editorial/advertisement ratio to that of *PCG*.

This exchange was childish, but it went on, with writers saying CRASH is better, *PCG* is better, and the whole exchange is pointless. The latter comment is the one with which I agree the most, it was pointless. It is extremely unlikely that either CRASH or *PCG* lost any readers over the exchange; in fact you both probably gained some, with readers trying to find out which magazine was the best. But that was over a year ago, and a war of words would not take place again. However, recently CRASH has tried these tactics again.

I am referring to the article by Graeme Kidd on Previews and exclusives. Although he did not mention any names, he made it obvious that they were wrong and CRASH is right. Perhaps he now feels threatened by other magazines, as Kean and *PCG* did in April-May 1984. Other magazines are not likely to lose readers if they print 'EXCLUSIVE' when it is not, nor are they likely to gain many, for 'shelf-readers' will be able to look through other magazines and see clearly that it is not. Why then, does CRASH try smear tactics. Perhaps Mr Kidd wants us to know CRASH is super honest, and the others are bad, wrong and dishonest.

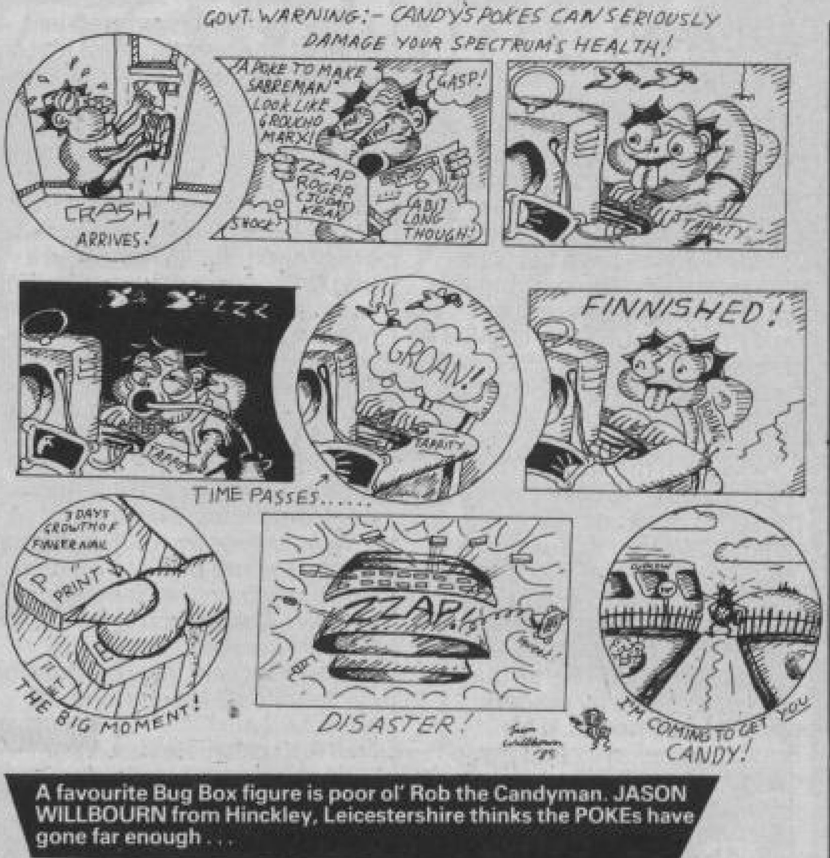
To conclude I wonder what Mr Kidd has to say about this, and if it is true, that CRASH is resorting to smear tactics to gain readers.
Alistair Blakey, Durbanville, Cape Town, S Africa

This all seems to be coming a long time after the event, since the article to which you refer appeared in the August 85 issue, but perhaps that's due to delays in communications between South Africa and Britain. Having seen both exchanges take place, can I say that there is a vast difference between them. The CRASH/PCG thing was pretty pointless — no one minds a bit of gossip along the lines of misspelling the mag's name, but the reference to the Steve Turner article was more serious, since it reflected on CRASH's integrity. Graeme's editorial last August was entirely different, and had absolutely nothing to do with what you call 'smear tactics' — if you like it was a statement of intent that CRASH would avoid reviewing and (more importantly) rating games that weren't completed. We have heard often enough, that when people can't see games very well before they buy them, the main guide is what mags say about the product and that product ought to be finished properly before it is rated. Seems obvious to me.
LM

OH WOE IS ME

Dear Lloyd,
Am I the unluckiest Spectrum, owner in the world? Does anyone else have all these things wrong with their computer?
(1) My keyboard is falling apart. When I try typing a full stop, 7 times out of 10 I get an m. 8 times out of 10 an n instead of a comma, and an incredible 9 times out of 10 a b instead of an asterisk. Oh for a Spectrum Plus.
(2) My printer refuses to work and covers my desk in burnt carbon.
(3) My Slomo crashes the games it is most useful for.
(4) My lightpen is incapable of drawing a straight line (or curved line for that matter).
(5) My new joystick requires at least 10 tons of force to make it respond.
(6) I have had a new TV screen. Now my lightpen doesn't work at all, and as for Lenslok ——
(7) My tape recorder insists on changing speed towards the end of loading a long program.
(8) Three of my tapes have just mysteriously disappeared.
(9) Half of my games have kindly been wiped off their tapes for me by someone who shall remain anonymous.
(10) My Currah Speech has a speech defect.
So you see Lloyd, help is urgently required. Please send the aspirins, pain-killers, headache tablets and, if possible, twenty pounds of any software that works properly to:
J Morgan, Oswestry, Shropshire
PS Do you have a phone, and if so, why aren't you in the directory.

So you think you're special, huh? The above is a description of a perfectly normal day at CRASH Towers. And no, I'm not on the phone — hateful things. I detest the idea of a contraption that allows anyone to intrude when I'm at home. If I'm required urgently in the office they just light a fire on the roof and I can see the smoke signals from my hillside cottage among the trees. Those Redskins weren't fools y'know.
LM



A favourite Bug Box figure is poor ol' Rob the Candyman. JASON WILLBOURN from Hinckley, Leicestershire thinks the POKEs have gone far enough . . .

DISGUSTING COVERS!

Dear Lloyd,
Oh dearie me that picture of *Mikie* was disgusting, I mean I could see half of his bare arm and the sexual overtones were disgusting.

Seriously I don't see why people are complaining about your December issue, after all blood and guts are common place on the television, on the news at six o' clock you could see far worse. People who go on about the violence and sexual overtones on your covers shouldn't be living in the eighties but in the victorian age. After all, the same argument about 'Tom and Jerry' and cartoons in general, has been that they are too violent. Pretend violence mind you.

If people don't like what they see then don't buy it, I but I have to agree that December's cover was a bit sick.
Mark Oldham, Middleton, Manchester
PS What's happened to Design Design? We haven't heard of them for quite a while.

I think that about sums up my feelings on the matter as well. Des Des are doing some new things, although I have heard they're developing on the Amstrad now and then converting to the Spectrum — traitors.
LM



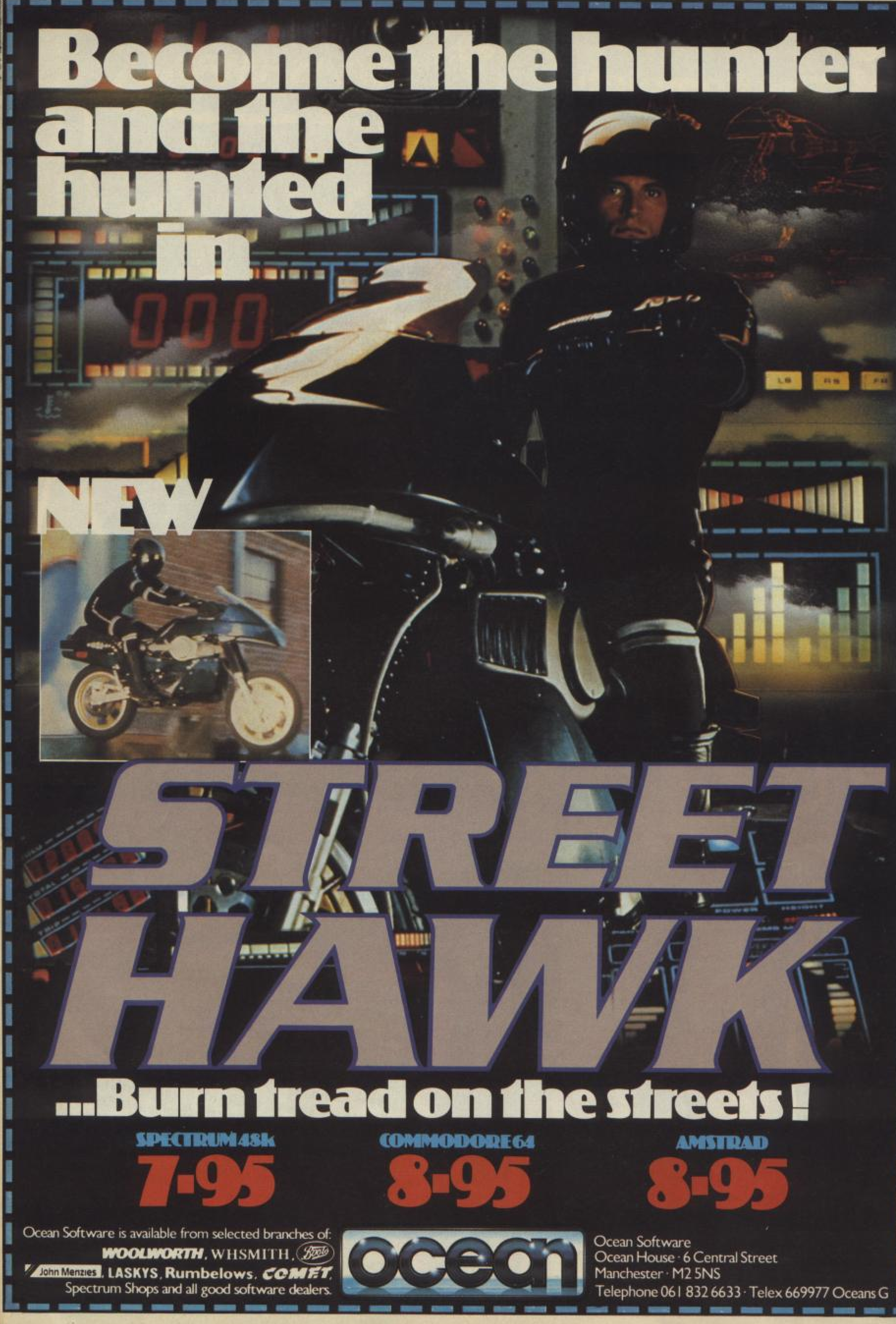
MILDRED THE CLEANING LADY

Dear Lloyd,
You probably know me, I'm Mildred, your cleaning lady. The other year I was dusting the mantlepiece above the fire-place, minding my own business as usual when I heard you talking to yourself about your job. You said something like, 'This is the life—' (feet up on the desk) '— Why don't I create a person to do another of my jobs. Then I would get my salary. Yes! That would be like robbing candy from a baby. Why don't I call him Robin Candy!' And with that you rushed out of the room. Your secrets are out. If you don't let me know, then I shall assume that you admit it, and I'll broadcast it all across the world and that would be the end of your jobs!
Yours cunningly
Mildred Wilding, Thorndon, Suffolk

Your fired, Mildred. I'll get another cleaner.
LM

Okay, that's enough. I've got to snow plough off up the hill and get the broom out (now Mildred's been fired). Must remember to buy some steak, Robin's coming for tea and he likes his blood fresh (no cooked hearts for RC). I leave you from a snow-covered, gore and blood-streaked Ludlow, reeking with covers of dubious taste — see you next month.


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Crashtionnaire '86

Help us help you and you could pick up £100 of goodies!

It's Questionnaire time again folks! The annual **CRASH** event in which we ask you for your opinions on the magazine has come round again. The answers you gave us to the questions we asked in earlier CRASHTIONNAIREs proved enormously useful in keeping **CRASH** the way you like it — if lots of people hadn't told us that program listings were OUT, who knows . . . they might be cluttering up our pages even now!

This year, apart from the usual mix of questions about **CRASH**, we've asked YOU a few more questions. If you don't mind answering them, then your responses would be very helpful to us in getting to know you better. But if you'd rather keep a few secrets, we won't be offended!

It's vital that as many readers as possible return CRASHTIONNAIRE forms — if you don't want to lop the page out of your copy of the magazine, a photocopy will do fine, and written answers will be okay too, so long as you copy out the format of the questions too.

As usual, we're going to put all the completed forms in a giant cardboard box and this year we will draw out ten winners. First Prize winner will collect £60 of software of his or her choice, a jog suit, a **CRASH** Sweatshirt, a **CRASH** hat and a twelve month subscription to the magazine. A good £100 worth of goodies! Four runners up will collect a twelve month subscription, £12 worth of software and a **CRASH** T Shirt and hat. Five more CRASHTIONNAIRE-replying persons will collect their very own T Shirt.

You've got about a month to put your thinking cap on (it could soon be replaced by a **CRASH** Cap!): sharpen your biro and fill in your answers. Send the form to **CRASH QUESTIONS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive by 27th March at the very, very latest. We'll publish the results in the June issue, with luck and a following wind.

Thank you!

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... **POST CODE** ....

T Shirt Size (S, M or L) ....

SECTION ONE: ABOUT CRASH

1) Since May last year, how many of the last ten issues have you bought?

LESS THAN 3 ☐
3–5 ☐
6–8 ☐
9–10 ☐

2) On average, how many other people read your copy of CRASH? ☐☐

3) If you get CRASH regularly, how do you buy it? (Tick one Box)

By subscription ☐
Reserved or delivered by newsagent ☐
Over the counter ☐

4) In order of preference, which other computer titles you you buy?

Sinclair User ☐
Your Sinclair ☐
Popular Computing World ☐
ZX Computing ☐
Computer and Video Games ☐
Computer Gamer ☐
Popular Computing Weekly ☐
Other (please specify below) ☐

....

5) Do you intend buying another computer in the next six months? (Y or N) ☐

6) Please give marks out of ten for each of the following features in CRASH

Adventure trail ☐☐
Advertisements ☐☐
Arcade game reviews ☐☐
Bug Box ☐☐
Competitions ☐☐
CRASH Forum ☐☐
Editorial page(s) ☐☐
Frontline ☐☐
General articles ☐☐
Hall of Slime ☐☐
Hardware articles ☐☐
Hotline charts ☐☐
Lunar Jetman ☐☐
Merely Mangram ☐☐
News Input ☐☐
Playing Tips ☐☐
Programmer/Company profiles ☐☐
Previews ☐☐
Signpost ☐☐
Tech Niche ☐☐
Tech Tips ☐☐

7) List any other features you'd like to see in CRASH:

....

....

....

8) Is the current rating system
Good ☐
Average ☐
Bad ☐
(Tick one)

9) How often do you agree with the ratings?
Always ☐
Quite often ☐
Occasionally ☐
Never ☐
(Tick one)

10) When you buy games, do you decide what to buy after reading the review in CRASH

Every time ☐
Quite often ☐
Now and then ☐
Never ☐

11) The CRASH reviews.
Please tick the boxes if you think things are okay as they are, or write an M for more, L for less if you'd like changes

Detail ☐
No of screen shots ☐
Amount of reviewers opinion ☐
Length ☐

12) If it was up to you, how would you improve the rating system?

....

....



SECTION TWO: ABOUT YOU

A) Are you

Male ☐
Female ☐

B) How old are you? ☐☐

C) Are you following, or have you followed any of these courses of study?

CSE ☐
GCE O Level ☐
GCE A Level ☐
GCSE ☐
Degree/Technical Certificate ☐
School leaving certificate ☐

D) How much pocket money do you spend a week?

Up to £1 ☐
£1–£2 ☐
£2–£5 ☐
£5–£10 ☐
Over £10 ☐
(Tick one)

E) Other than home computing, what hobbies/interests you you have?

Model making ☐
Pop music ☐
Play by mail games ☐
Playing sports ☐

Which sports? ....

....

F) Apart from CRASH, what else do you read? Please list titles:

MAGAZINES

....

....

COMICS

....

....

NEWSPAPERS

....

....

G) How often do you listen to commercial radio stations?

All the time ☐
Regularly ☐
Sometimes ☐
Never ☐

Please list the stations you listen to:

....

....

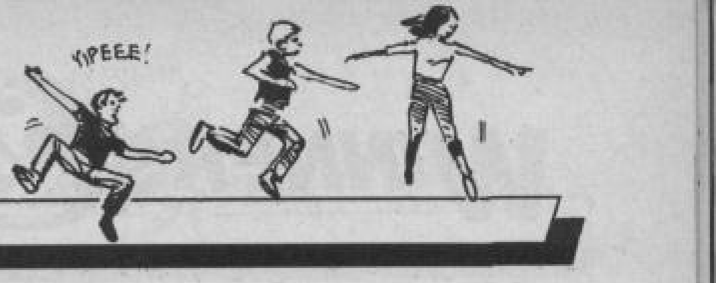
H) Which of the following do you drink regularly?

Coca Cola ☐
Pepsi Cola ☐
7 Up ☐
Quattro ☐
55 ☐
Cariba ☐
Other ☐
Please list ....

I) Do you holiday abroad?

Rarely ☐
Once a year ☐
Twice a year ☐
More often ☐

WINNERS & PRIZES



COO! — aren't you just a clever bunch of competition entrants . . . Look at this lot

At last! We can let you have the results from the Christmas Special Competitions and the December Issue. Yes, this Minion is well aware that a couple are still missing — like the Alligata Match Fishing results. We know who the winners are, and by the time you read this, you'll know if you're a winner, 'cos the prize will have arrived. Except for N PALMER of Old Kempshott Lane, Basingstoke who will soon be going on a one week's adventure holiday between now and the end of May. The Fishing Kit on offer as Second Prize was won by GAVIN WILDING, Fen Lodge, The Street, Thorndon.

There's no room to say anything else — we're so short of space. . . .



CRASH HACKER COMP December Issue

Hack, Hack, Hacketty Hack you all went, and differences were spotted throughout the land. The shortlist (*fifty names ain't short* — **ED**) of winners who each collect a copy of Activision's game, *Hacker* is as follows:

Stuart Harris Whitelands Ave WO3 5RD; Sean Taylor Caterine Way WA12 8RG; Steven Moore Greengate LA8 8NF; Simon Scott Silver Springs BH20 6BU; Alan Smith Chesnut Grove KT13 3JJ; Steven Bowran Merton Ave SO5 1EJ; Andrew Goodwin Forge Cottages GU6 8SL; Sergio Bonito Melbourne Court SE20 8AS; D Simpson Rowan SP3 4HB; Eryl Jones Argraig LL48 6LR; Mark Meaney Herard Waas Rd EIRE; Michael Chandler Cairn 'O' Mount PA22 3EQ; Peter Wallage The Thatchings BN26 5DT; Alan Thomas Woodgate Rd GL14 7QQ; JF Masters Welbeck Rd M30 9EH; Adam Bailey Mallard Close GR10 0BE; Jamie Sayer Beaumont Way PE30 4UB; NJ Mohr Westminster Rd M30 9EB; Mark Collins Clifton St ST5 0JL; Ross Lillywhite Knox Rd PO2 8JL; Bill Kersel Calderview Ave ML5 4TL; Peter Robinson Shottendene Rd CT9 4NA; N Tulett Hollywood Lane ME7 2AR; Ian Haves Boveen Sharavogue IRELAND; Mrs C Middleton MeresBrook Park Rd S8 9FN; Paul D McMullen Kelsey Gardens DN4 7QB; Mike Clarke Carlyle Close MK16 8PZ; Jon Sendel Selly Oak Rd S8 8DU; Alexander Bates Verdi Close RG22 4JE; Adrian Conn Sandringham Rd DN2 5JD; Geraint Jones South Manor Way L25 9NR; Adrian Mitchell Greenhill Gardens BS12 2PD; Paul Taylor Tennyson Ave SK16 5DR; Milan Petrovich Dell Rd B30 2HZ; Gareth Jones Gotham Rd L63 9NQ; John Millar Mayfield Rd SK7 1JU; Mrs S Churton Merthy St CF2 4JL; Jason Merritt Allenby Drive RM11 3SA; Justin O'Brien Eastbourne Rd E SUSSEX; Tim Dickson Penarth Court SM2 5LA; J Bennett Killingworth Rd NE12 0BR; JM Sorensen The Ridge Way NE3 4LN; Rick Bechot CL U Kietenstrt HOLLAND; Ian Muir Crofthead Drive NE23 6LG; JH Bevan Westerdale NE28 8UB; Mr M W Smith Rimswell Rd TS19 7LJ; David Jennings Crimicar Ave S10 4EQ; Jennifer Muir Crofthead Drive NE23 6LG; Alan Walton Peel Close BB2 3NG; MR K Greener Featherstone DH3 4NB

SWEEVO's WORLD WINNERS November Issue

At long last, we reveal the winner of the Ferguson colour monitor offered by Gargoyle Games way back in the November issue. Trouble was, the comp didn't appear on the Contents page for that ish, so this Minion kept missing it. You lot, of course, didn't. Especially not **Richard Creak** of Keswick Gardens HU6 8TB who won! The rest of you pick up a copy of the game . . .

RUNNERS UP

Ian Hunt Old Lodge Lane CR2 4AN; Huw Lloyd TyGwyn Road CF2 5JE; Christopher Chapman Baldock Road SG6 3JX; Jeroen Nijs Rode Kruislaah 5 Holland; Paul English Medwall Green SO2 6JP; David Jenkins Deerbrook NP44 45X; M Gate Panorama Road BH19 2QT; Patrick Boyle Kintyre Avenue Renfrewshire; W Stevens St Barnabas Road CR4 2DW; Ian Muir Crofthead Drive NE23 6LG; Richard Tudor Clement Road SK6 5AG; Mr Hapeful Shelton Fields SY3 8PA; Mr C Yamada Hillcrest Road RM11 1EF; R Payne Lauderdale Avenue FY5 3JP; Matt Totham Partridge Drive Essex; Mr N Knowles Winstree Road CMO 8ET; Mr D C Lloyd Charnwood Way CV32 7BU; Steven Smith Dene Close ST19 5HL; L Parker Totteridge Road HP13 7LE; Tim Fisher Kings Road GU13 9DR; Gary Smillie Platt Avenue OL6 8RT; Brian Poole Greenbarn Way BL6 5TA; A Auckland Boulby Drive TS13 4JN; Andrew Thake Boyd Close CM23 5EG; Robert Adey Mistletoe Street DH1 4EP; Martin Aldridge Greenfern Avenue SL1 6AQ; Neil Middleton London Road CT11 ODA; A P Goode Coleraine Road B42 1LW; Alex Caulderon The Avenue BR3 2ES; Keith Burnham Sandhurst Avenue B36 8EJ

MELBOURNE HOUSE CHRISSY CAMEL CAPTION COMP

Mr B Bird of Clarendon Place, LS2 now wins the complete works from Melbourne House for his witty caption of thiny on the camel. Other people collect copies of *Fighting Warrior* and they are known as the

RUNNERS UP

Roger Judd, Croxdale, NE10 ORR; Nigel Rivers, Roche Close, SN3 6JQ; Deborah Hodgson, Redworth Road, DL4 2JJ; Howard Rickards, Winstanley Road, WN5 7XD; Martin Chiles, Shelton Close, WS10 OTZ; Bill Kersel, Calderview Avenue, ML5 4TL; M Einon, Hunters Park, SA70 8TP; Greg Saunders, Ranelagh Road, IP2 0AF; Adam Gill, Bambury Road, M24 1QB; Scott Ashmore, Elford Crescent, PL7 4BL; Steven Brambley, Temple Drive, NG16 1BE; Richard Fallon, Pershore Road, DY11 6DJ; Karl Rowe, Marlborough Road, DY3 1BR; Raymond Francis, Montpelier Gions, RM6 4EJ; Master A Rowan, Thirlmere Drive, M24 3WT; Richard Gatehouse, Boxholme Terrace, Leeds 7; Ian Wood, Kingsway, LS15 7BU; Erick Caan, Gatton Close, RHZ OHG; Michael Reid, South Street, PO5 4DP; Jon King, Porthmunster Terrace, TR26 2BQ; Michael Healey, Caledon Road, NG5 2NG; Ste Whalen, Fylde Avenue, PR5 3RP; C Emblem, Lafflands Lane, WF4 2AE; Alan Thomas, Woodgate Road, GL1U 7QQ; Leon Jollans, Sodanecouet Road, BH14 OPQ; Dominic Jones, Askham Lodge, YO2 3QR; P J O' Meara, Newtownaday, Ireland; Chris Lewis, Oakhill Road, KT21 2JG; Richard McConnell, Eyre Street, CF2 2JT; Yiv Man Cheung, Church Street, LS26 8RD; Lesley Cutting, Cambridge Road, ME8 OJH; Stephen Wallace, Redwood Close, CM8 2PL; N J Weare, Rolleston Road, LE7 9ED; Joe Hile, Maidenstone Hill, SE19 8SX; John Fisher, Central Drive, WA11 8DE; A Barton, Royden Road, WN5 7LP; Chris Fulton, Station Avenue, EN91 LE9; J D Doggett, The Drive, EN6 2AP; Philip Middlewood, Bury Hill, SG19 2RS; Neil Cane, Wokingham Road, RG6 2EL; Brian Tracy, Boundary Farm, L26 1TY; Paul Rundle, Merewood Avenue, OX3 8EG; Michael Gaunt, Vicarage Drive, ST14 5DL; Daniel Jeyes, Abington Park Crescent, NN3 3AD; P N Barlow, Berllan Avenue, LL18 2UG; Mr S Fleahy, Featherstone Close, NG4 4JA; Stephen Clapham, The Haven, DL2 2DN; Andrew Matthews, Capmartin Road, CV6 3FW; Thomas Lennon, Kingstanding Road, B44 8LB; Daniel Watkins, Meadow Rise, DY12 17S

MELBOURNE HOUSE's BIG DADDY CHRISSY COMP

Steven Cook of Ornsay Street, G22 7HP is the other winner of Melbourne House's complete works for the Spectrum. He was witty about the Big Daddy photo, in case you were wondering. A whole stack more fellows and fellowesses collect copies of *Rock and Wrestle*, the fighting game from Melbourne House, which should be ready to send very soon. Be patient, you lot!

RUNNERS UP

Mr I Hart, Lower End, MK18 2DB; David Crozier, Cowley Crescent, DH5 9QY; Mark Rose, Newberries Avenue, WD7 7EJ; Robert Lines, The Last House, PO12 2QW; David Gorton, Revidge Road, BB1 8DJ; Alasdair Kelly, Main Street, KY3 OUQ; Justin Gentle, The Avenue, PO12 2JY; Paul McLeish, Taunton Avenue , WN7 5PT; K L Bennett, Oaklands, SN6 6EB; J Murray, Taunton Avenue, NN3 3LY; Martin Daine, Edward Street, DN3 5PS; J Clarke, Grace Way, SG1 5AA; Adam Wray, Wattsfield Avenue, LA9 5JJ; Simon Proudman, West Town Lane, B54 5DK; R Norfolk, Grays Close, ST7 3LU; Marc James, Main Street, LE12 5PE; Philip Gillibrand, St Austell Avenue, M29 7FY; R Prior, Trinity Road, GU21 2SY; Taimanidis Thesfiles, Agiou Georgiou 21, Greece; Michael Beer, Voss Park Close, CF6 9YF; P Redington, Martin Grove, SM4 5AJ; Chris ad, PO36 8DT; J Singh, Manor Road, TF1 4PN; J S Russell, Thorney Close, PO14 3AF; S J Zsibrita, Bowood Road, EN3 7LH; Leon Orr, Fitzwilliam Avenue, BT7 2HJ; Mr R Klobucki, Lock Crescent, OX5 1HE

MARTECH's ZOIDS XMAS COMP

Shezad Hussain from St Peters Road, Berkshire is the lucky fellow who collects a copy of *Zoids*, a giant Zoidzilla and a little Zoid, courtey of Tomy, and a poster. Next in line, are twenty people who gain their own copy of the game. They came:

SECOND

Stephen A Graham, Green Lane, Cumbria; Craig Wright, Mount Cottages, TF4 3LL; Jason Coggins, Moorhens, GU34 3ET; Allan Batchelor, Thackeray Avenue, N17 9DY; John Adams, Clapham Road, L42 TQ; A Garland, Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU; J A Hugget, Beech Farm Drive, SK10 2ER; John Hill, Crediton Close, NN3 3AJ; Russell Thomas, Hazel Drive, LE17 4TX; J Birbeck, King Edwards Road, WR14 4AJ; Matthew Ayres, North Street, CMO 7DF; Master G Taylor, California Road, BS15 6PP; Linda Kingsford, Cavendish Drive, NN3 3HL; Nick Annies, Sallowbush Road, PE18 7AF; Jonathon Amor, Coombe Court, RG13 4JR; R Ellis, Ashworth Park, WA16 9DE; Paul Price, Bromley Close, DH7 2TZ; Philip Botley, Stanstead Avenue, WA5 2HU; Neil Cole, Cornwallis Drive, CM3 5YE; Christian Stone, Trendlewood Park, BS16 1TE

Last, but not least, are the people who collect a Zoids poster. What a stack of excellent designs we had from you all. Well done, folks!

RUNNERS UP

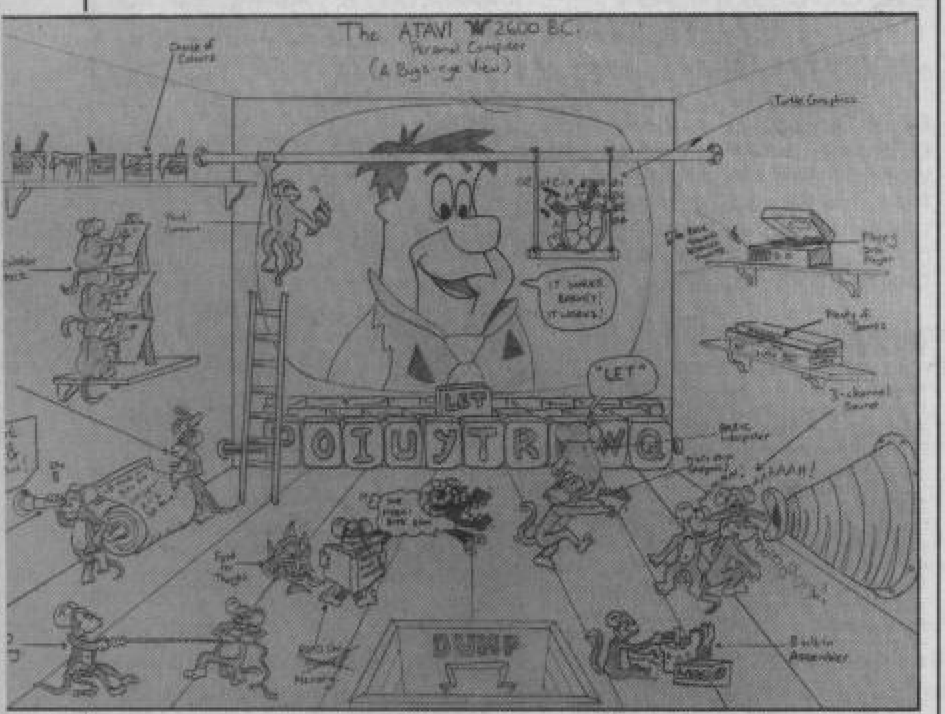
Paul Osbourne, Erith Road, DA7 6HT; Jack Barber, Nottingham Road, NG10 2BZ; Chris Smith, Rhus, AB5 3ET; Matthew Furniss, Moorwoods Avenue, S30 4WA; Neil Smith, Sandyforth Avenue, FYS 4BS; Neil Martin, Springwood, BA3 6JR; Jason Fong, Lukut, Malaysia; Jason Drane, Balder Rise, SE12 9PF; E Johnson, Hoyles Lane, PR4 ONB; Alex Gick, Kavanaghs Road, CM14 4NB; Peter Eveleigh, Llwyn Castan, CF2 7DA; Neil Clarkson, Dowding Way, SN12 6SQ; Timothy Dunley, Roderick Avenue, BN9 8BS; Russell Hagan, Dunkirk Road, PR8 4QZ; Brian Morrison, Carlavarock Drive, EH33 2EE; D R Wad, Tottehate Close, Southampton; Shukel M Ali, Roberts Street, M30 OFX; Kerry Jefferies, Wilton Park Road, PO37 7BU; Robert Edwardson, Windermere Road, CW7 26Y; G E Baggot, Osborne Road, SO3 6GJ; Raymond Lucas, Hawthorn Road, G67 3LX; James Home, Burley Place, Wales; C J Wright, Tyburn Road, L63 9HJ; Philip Bonner, The Forge, NG11 8NB; Tim Morton, Dyke Vale Road, S12 4EQ; Neil Lansdell, Earlham Road, NR4 7HL; Martin Scanlan, Albecq, TR3 7JT; James Fordy, Hen Parc Avenue, SA2 7HA; Craig Wright, Mount Cottages, , TF4 3LL; Jason Coggins, Moorhens, GU34 3ET



WINNERS & PRIZES



FRED FLINTSTONE COMP



David Green of Greenhill Road, S8 OBA is the person who will now be able to enjoy playing games on his Spectrum even more. He wins a colour telly for his Stone Age computer design. Copies of the game, *Yabba Dabba Doo* from Quicksilva are even now winging their way to the

RUNNERS UP

David Gosnell, Sixty Acres Road, HP16 OPE; R Norfolk, Grays Close, ST7 3LU; John Lovett, Willow Road, GL10 2DS; Khalid Jamil, Gladstone Park Gardens, NW2 6LA; Nick Moodie, Church Road, SE19 2EZ; A M Allum, Brook House, Herts; Mr L Gunn, Chestnut Road, S31 O5N; Paul Hibbard, Hildaville Drive, SS0 9RT; Allan Batchelor, Thackeray Avenue, N17 9DY; Colin Reekie, Schoolhouse, KY10 2DH; Hansi Koppe, Avenue Road, AL1 3PY; Harry To, Douglas Place, Scotland, KY6 1BA; J C Shaw , Boston Gardens, TW8 9LR; C Powell, Boleyn Close, HP2 7LW; Gary Frame, Glen Farrar, G74 2AG; Mark Drayton, Chinnor Road, OX9 3LS; Richard Ives, Joan Ward Street, CV3 5FW; Richard Cooper, Mount Pleasant, DY6 9SL; Tam French, Barton Way, PO20 8JD; Alex Muir, Owen Avenue, G75 9AQ; Neil Martin, Springwood, BA3 6JR; Chris Davy, Bridge Hill, CM16 4ER; S M Barron, Longfield Avenue, E17; Paul Fallon, Denholme, Lancs; Richard Brook, The Wynd, Scotland

BALLBLAZER CHRISTMAS COMP

Activision will be sending out three VTX5000 modems very soon. First, second and third in the queue will be: **Colin May**of Runswick Drive, NG8 1JB; **Janet Hall**of Parkgate, WA16 8HE and **D M Shannon** from Moyola Park, BT36 8ER. Twenty five more entrants won themselves a copy of the game itself, *Ballbalzer*.

RUNNERS UP

John Corr, Viola Avenue, TW14 0EN; A Holme, St Clare's Close, DE3; Michael Main, Pelegarth, NE61 5JY; Donald Findlay, Mansionhouse Road, E9 1TZ; Robert Hughes , Warwick Avenue, CV5 6DJ; David Twigge, Palmeston Road, PR9 7AQ; D Markillie, Marshall Road, CB1 4TY; Mr R Chowdhury, Hammersmith Gardens, LU5 5RG; A J Markham, Bishops Walk, NR31 9BQ; Tim Hardman, Walter Street, WA1 3TE; Julian Mawson, Silverdale Grange, LS20 8PX; Kevin Fisher, Lea-Gate, GL12 8BD; David Marshall , Beechfield Road, SK9 7AT; Dr P C B Page, Beryl Road, L43 9RS; Mr P Hammond, Heath Road, IP19 9DU; Mr S D Leason, Heathfield Road, ST14 7ON; Kevin Devine , Thornhill, YO11 3LY; Mr R W Leason, Heathfield Road, ST14 7SN; Mr R Bird , Clarendon Place, LS2; David Oldcorn, Dean Villa, PR3 5DD; Steve Edwards, Harewood Way, M27 2FX ; D Irving, Chapel Hill, NG33 4BP; Alun George, Davison Avenue, NE26 3SY ; Richard Sparks, Waterloo Paddock, LN5 OQW; Julian Smith, Copperkins, HP6 5RW

BC's QUEST FOR TIRES COMP December Issue

A super dooper Midi HiFi system is on its way to **Stephen Nolan** and he lives at Hahnemwn Rd, L4 3SA. Two people each win a Second Prize, to wit, the complete works of Software Projects on the Spectrum. They like to be called **J Keates** who lives at Stonar Close, CT13 9LH and **Miss C Butcher** of Industrial Cottages, LN1 1DZ. Then there were the copies of *BC's Quest for Tires* that are soon to be sent off to the

RUNNERS UP

Richard Astwood, Chapel Lane, NG15 9DA; G Swinburn, Morningside Rd, L11 1AU; Julian Mawson, Silverdale Grange, LS20 8PX; Richard Lambert, Pature Side Farm, HG3 4EX; Gary Prescod, Harvel Court, SE2 0PS; Bryan O'Rourke, Ladysmith St, IV26 2UW; Mr S Leason, Heathfield Rd, ST14 7SN; Michael Hilton, Liverpool Rd, M30 5BG; Andrew Welsh, Durwegan, DH3 2JH; J Bentley, Wheatlands Park, TS10 2PD; Chris Beck, Grattan St, S61 2JR; Steven Warren, 'Mewslade', NP6 5BS; Malcolm Dove, Cotton Gardens, NE9 6NQ; G Attkinson, The Cottage, EX20 2LG; Adrain Telford, The Cullerns, SN6 7NN; Sean Stephenson, Heugh Rd, NE66 3TJ; Michael Godfrey, Corfe Crescent, SK7 5PS; BL Davis, Sandon Rd, ST16 2MG; Barry Hilton, Walnut Walk, E SUSSEX; Khalid , Gladstone Park Gardens, NW2 6LA; Simon Adams, Downs Rd, SM2 5PR; Mr K Greener, Featherstone, DH3 4NB; Simon Webster, Almond Rd, NR31 8EJ; DW May, Riverview Grove, W4 3QP; Peter Luckham, Derby Rd, M14 6UX

HEWSON COMP WINNERS

What a lucky lot you all are! Playing Programmer's Photofit landed all you lot with copies of *Dragontorc, Legend of Avalon, Technician Ted, Southern Belle*, and of course *Astroclone*. Say thank you to the nice Mr Hewson!

Stephen Albrow, Woods Coke West, NR32 3DN; Dave Bailey, Wake Green Road, B13 9PZ; Michael Barker, Hedon Road, HU9 5ND; Andrew Barnard, Lyme Avenue, SK11 7RS; Andrew Bezant, High Street, NW13 5LT; Stephen Cornwell, Highfield Avenue, WF8 2PT; C.Emblem, Lafflands Lane, WF4 2AE; Gavin Flood, Lower Sheepham Farm, PL21 0LX; Stuart Green, Huntington Road, YO3 7RB; John Gregory, The Lawley, B63 1JB; Michael Hackett, Lubbersthorpe Road, LE3 2XH; P.Hammond, Heath Road, IP19 9DU; Lee Ingham, Warwick Close, KV16 0HW; Spike James, Wingfield Road, HU9 4QE; Mike Jennings, Merry Hill Mount, WD2 1DJ; Chris Lafferty, Ivanhoe Crescent, ML2 7DZ; Michael Lewis, Machen Road, GL16 7BU; Craig Mitchell, Moncktons Avenue, ME14 2QF; Stephen Mulgrew, Floors Road, G76 0PX; Jamie Paterson, The Malting, PE17 1GZ; Mark Rampersad, Bressey Grove, E18 2HX; Alex Ridge, Village Close, CO13 0PF; Jon Rose, Lion Road, PO21 3JZ; Mark Shaw, Merton Drive, L36 4NS; M.Starks, Clifton Road, BS23 1BP; Kevin Ternent, Broom Hill, PL12 4DZ; G.Walters, Eghams Farm, HD9 1XL; Daniel Watkins, Meadow Rise, DY12 1JS; Glen White, The Avenue, OX10 8LL; David Wright, Churchfield, WN6 8BE

US GOLD CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Two top prize people will soon have a ZX Expansion Pack each, for coming top in this competition. Their names are, wait for it, wait for it: **Rashid Razak** of St Joan Close, RH11 7SW and **Gareth Ford**, The Oaks, DE7 6DJ

RUNNERS UP

And yet a stack more entrants came out of the giant cardboard box and, as a result, should soon have their very own freebie copy of *Impossible Mission*

Colin Jennings, Glendower Street, CF48 3SG; Robert Lines, The Last House, PO12 2QW; Wayne Birch, White Cottage, LN7 6NP; Martin Page, Commodore Road, NR32 3NF; Steven Vincent, Marlborough Close, RH12 4FE; Stephen Cummins, Firs Hamlet, CO5 8NF; Alun Bevan, Leyland Lane, PR5 3BQ; Jacquie Attwood, Aylsham Road, NR3 2HF; Carl Gilbride, White Knowle Road, SK17 9NG; Anthony Morley, Church Lane, HU12 8JG; David Turner, Welford Road, B90 3HT; Stephen Steele, West Street, DH2 3LW; Charles Lomas, Printon Avenue, M9 3JW; C Crowhurst, Cullingworth Avenue, HU6 7DD; Ian Hunt, Old Lodge Lane, CR2 4AN; N Sandues, Drakeshill Close, DY8 3LE; Mr M Hibbert, Somerset Drive, S43 1DH; David J Sneddon, Coleshill Street, B72 1SH; Kevin Almond, Bounces Road, N9 8JR; Gary Dunn, Hermitage Avenue, DE7 3JL; Philip B Miggiton, Ironside Road, S14 1FP; Timothy Grace, Druids Cross Gardens, L18 3FB; Karen Almond, Bounces Road, N9 8JR; Mr R Smith, Pavillion Road, CT19 5RL; Mark Thomas, Wheatridge , PL7 4QZ; J Clarke, Grace Way, SG1 5AA; Ian Walford, Bilson, GL14 2LJ; John Hill, Crediton Close, NN3 3AJ; C Brown, The Crescent, TN9 1SA; Darren Jeffery, Shooters Hill, SE18 3HY; Vincent Teo, North Road, SG14 1NF; Luke Nation, Westward Road, BS13 8DA; Jamie Jenkins, Hillview Road, EH12 8QQ; Tyrone Hougham, Pritchard Street, South Wales; Hamish Primrose, Sandhead Road, ML10 6HX; Andrew Barnard, The Crooked House, PO10 7BJ; Kevin Hoffman, Cedar Avenue, Norfolk; Lee Harrison, Dovehouse Lane, B91 2EV; David Bates, Willow Road, B91 1UE; A Chapman, Douglas Road, B68 9ST; Mr C Lloyd, Crookham Road, SO2 9NG; D R Williams, Gregson Road, L35 5DL; Steven Rundle, St Lawrence Way, SW9 6NP; Matthew Pinner, Matthew Flinders Way, PE21 8BN; Neil CcDowall, Ashfield House, SP2 7EG; Dominic Williams, Heathfield Road, CF4 3JY; Mr K Madaheur, Maun Avenue, NG7 5RW; Crash Reader, Colebank Road, B28 8EZ; Gavin Marshall, Spur Road, BR6 OQL; Graham Roberts, Sutton Avenue, L64 OTQ

MICRO MUSICAL MIDI COMP

John Camp, of Dommeville Close, N20 0LE wins the Casio Synthesiser and a MIDI interface for his Spectrum, while **Chris Wood** of Chatsworth Drive, ME10 1TW and **Ian Couldrey** of Margaret Road, CO11 1RZ collect MIDI interfaces courtesy of those nice Micro Musical people in Coventry

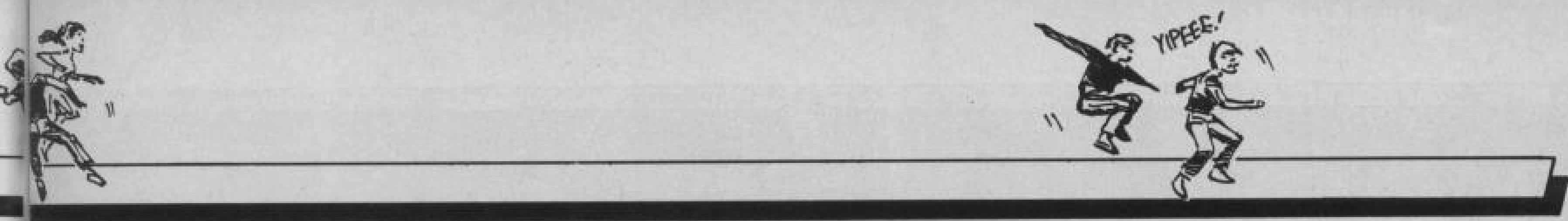
OCEAN CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

David May of Riverview Grove, W4 3QP; **B J Peck**, Cheviot Road, WV2 2HD; **Chris O' Sullivan**, Arnal Crescent, SW18 5PX; **Neil McKeown**, Whyterose Terrace, KY8 3AR and **David Alexander**, Hollybush Lane, TW12 2QY are the five lucky persons who collect a goodie bag from Ocean, full of surprises.

RUNNERS UP

Twenty five more entrants collect and Ocean game to complete their collection. What a clever lot of game spotters you all are!

Martin Bell, Shore Road, BT22 2RP; J Jackson, Pinehurst Road, SN2 1QF; E W Sykes, Kingsbury Croft, SN8 1HN; Philip Flack, Beech Grove, CT12 5LD; Owen Lewis, Mitchell Avenue, NE2 3LA; Colin Jennings, Glendower Street, CF48 3SG; Stephen Turney, Birdwood Road, CB1 3SU; Andrew Packwood, Wiltshire Close, CV12 8EU; Paul Holmes, Dragon Cottage, B96 2LA; D Markillie, Marshall Road, CB1 4TY; John Camp, Domville Close, N20 OLE; Simon Mantell, Harefield Road, UB8 1PP; Stephen Mounsey, Ashfield, CA6 4PS; David Shores, Garden Close, PE17 6X2; Keith Burnham, Sandhurst Avenue, B36 8EJ; Graham Needham, Lavernock Road, CF6 2NY; Karl Alldred, Lyndhurst, M30 5JQ; Martin Scanlan, Albecq, TR3 7JT; Grant Coulton, Rochford Road, CM23 5EX; Colm Buteux, Trenchard Drive, SK17 9JY; Adrian Chapple, Pool Road, BS16 1XN; Andrew Males, Lammas Path, GG2 9RN; R B Hall, Lindale Mount, WF2 OBH; R Betteley, Pine Walk, CW5 7DE; Robin Law, Queen Margaret's Road, ORE 8FW



TAU CETI COMP December Issue

A super dooper "Ghettoblaster" and a couple of blank tapes is on its way to the winner, who is **C Counsell** from Waterbench Drive, SO3 2SD. Twenty more winners collect a copy of the game, 'cos they are

RUNNERS UP

Ian King, Foxyard Rd, DY4 8BH; Wilson Hayhurst, Fell End Farm, LA7 7BW; John O'Connor, Hillside, SK15 2NW; DW May, Riverside Grove, W4 3QP; Paul Fletcher, Lowenva, IP25 7AX; Jason Guth, Chigwell Lane, IG10 3NY; Simon Jones, Grange Hill Rd, B38 8RE; John Tatlock, Brynn St, WA10 1JB; I Moir, Holt Rd, NR25 7AS; Marcus Cooper, Stourbridge Road, B61 0AN; Pete Tong, Rue des Belles Feuille, FRANCE; Bryan Else, Penzance Rd, DE2 0NH; Dagon Jones, Rokesley Ave, N8 8NR; Richard Sharp, Hall Av, NE4 9HX; David Thomas, Dalketh, B90 3PP; G Innes, Forlhill Rd, KA7 3DT; MJ Beck, Genefax House, S10 3FJ; A Willis, Swiss Av, CM1 2AF; Ken Aylmer, Mill Lane, OX3 0PY; Craig Taylor, Calder Drive, M27 3SY

DOMARK Friday 13th COMPETITION

Ian McAuliffe from West Common Grove, AL5 2LL will soon be enjoying a trip out, courtesy of the Sartorial Superstars of Domark. A few more folks will be Domarked for Life with fabaroonie T Shirts . . . .

RUNNERS UP

Carl Humphrey, Gildane Orchard Park, HU6 9AZ; Karl Rowe, Marlborough Road, DY3 1BR; N Roper, Keymarks, SS15 5PA; Paul Smith, Rushetts Road, RH2 7RQ; Mr J Hughes, Castle Moffat, EH41 4LW; Marcus Phokou, Methuen Park, N10 2JS; Jonathon Rogers, Therlow Road, PL3 6NZ; A J Coleman, Manilla Road, B29 7PZ; Mr J Bartlett, Insley Grove, GL23 3AH; David Martin, Sovereign Place, NE4 6UB; Stephen Scothern, Fitzwilliam Street, South Yorkshire; Andrew Staniford, Elvaston Road, S42 5NH; D O Connor, Audrey Gardens, HAO 3TG; J Wilson, Trustons Gardens, RM11 1ED; J Samuels, Warrens Shawe Lane, HA8 8FX; M Barker, Hedon Road, HU9 5ND; R D Tregale, Howard Avenue, SL2 1LB; Robert Barton, Brigg Road, DN20 9PD; Matthew Pinner, Matthew Flinders Way, PE21 8BN; Rory Mc Veigh, Colinmill, N Ireland; Ian Muir, Crofthead Drive, NE23 6LG; Timothy Grace, Druids Cross Gardens, L18 3EB; Asam Ahmed, Pirbright Road, SW18 5ND; Adam Sparshott, Cubitts Close, AL6 ODZ; David Earlam, Daniel Adamson Avenue, M31 4PR; Craig Moore, Farlam Drive, CA1 2XB; Stephen Nolan, Hahnemann Road, L4 3SA; Robert Norton, Goodyear Avenue, WV10 9JR; Michael Cook, Ladysmith Road, EN1 3AQ; Stephen Rudman, Midway Close, LN2 2TE; Philip Anderson, Hollins Crescent, HG1 2JG; Gavin Sevket, Flaxton Road, SE18 2EY; Ian Doggett, Bucklesham Road, IP10 OPD; Richard Temple, Kingswood Road, WD2 6EF; B Markillie, Marshall Road, CB1 4TY; Chris Whetlor, Thatchers Close, Worcs; John Turley, Alexandra Road, G31 3BP; R Stoney, Colemore House, Bristol; Matthew Lucklivrst, Matthew Old Bridge Road, CTS 1RJ; Ian Hunt, Old Lodge Lane, CR2 4AN; Alan Dewey, Rodger Road, S13 7RH; Micky Hogg, Westerham Close, Tyne & Wear; David Rostron, Grindon TCE, Tyne & Wear; Tracy Bentley, Radford Road, Warwickshire; Paul Yeomans, Beagle Ridge Drive, YO2 3JH; Damian Highwood, Hutsford Close, ME8 GSS; Duncan Campbell, The Knoll, NE61 5LQ; Peter O' Brien, Central Avenue, NG7 7AG; Stephen Grant, Osborne Road, BN1 6LR; Kevin Fisher, Lea Gate, GL12 8BD

DUCKWORTH's CHRIMBLE WINNERS

Half a dozen people will soon have bookshelves creaking under the strain of their prizes from Duckworths. A biography of Sir Clive Sinclair plus a host of other computer titles go to:

Derrick Austin, Calf Close, YO3 8NS; Stephen A Graham, Green Lane, CA2 1QB; Chris Davy, Bridge Hill, CM16 4ER; John Hartness, Cricket Lane, TS6 OHJ; Judy Falkner, Fellside, TN6 1TN; Neil Graham, Green Lane, Cumbria

OLI COMPETITION

Grahame Chidwick from Welholme Road, DN32 9LR will soon have a smashing Oliver Frey Original to hang on his favourite wall at home and impress his friend with. Good eh?

ROBOT MESSIAH COMPETITION December Issue

Pam Sellick of Evenlode Park, OX14 3SZ and **Neil McDowall** of Ashfield House, SP2 7EG are going to be getting a whizzo Saga Keyboard to tuck their Spectrums up in. T Shirts to the following:

RUNNERS UP

James Millen, Downsview, BN5 9YB; Ryan Scoular, Fhercus Loan, RH21 6BA; Richard Davies, Thirlmere Road, M31 2ST; Chris Crane, Constance Avenue, ST4 8TE; C Meadows, Kenlor Road, SW17 ODF; Chamal Panditha-Ratne, Bixley Drive, IP4 5TY; S J Cotterill, May Tree Lane, S19 6HA; Mr W F Bullock, The Heys , WA7 2DH; Steve Tempest, Harford Road, YO11 3SU; Gareth Jones, Gotham Road, L63 9NQ; Shane Cagney , Laurleen , Ireland; Andrew Sims, Roseneath, DA13 OTH; Paul Hetherington, Wreken Gardens, NE1V 8ST; R W Leason, Heathfiel Road, ST14 7JN; Lee Meaden, Waverley Avenue, NG9 2HZ; Richard McConnell, Eyre Street, CF2 2JT; John Firth, Masey Road, EX8 4BQ; Peter Carter, Whinneyfield Road, NE6 4RR; Doyen Vincent, Rue De L'Abbaye, Belgium; Mr R R Adams, Old Melton Road, NG12 5NH; S R Kay, Willow Road, M30 8JZ; Anthony Morley , Church Lane, HU12 8JG; C Yau, Delancey Street, NW1 7RX; Hilary Brown, Venner Avenue, PO31 8AF; David Kelly , Porthill Road, SY3 8RN; Mr B Davies, Millside , WV5 8JJ; Michael Candler, Cairn 'O' Mount, PA11 3EQ; Graham Persson, Balfour Street, EH6 5ER; Steven Moore , Greengate Levens, LA8 8NF; M Guerin, Broadoak Court , M8 8UL; Kevin Pennington, Middlethorpe Grove, YO22 LE; T W Pyman, Rugbyclose, Surrey; Jeremy Murray, Taunton Avenue, NN3 3LY; , Adam Gill, Banbury Road, M24 1QB; Vincent Teo, North Road, SG14 1NF; Peter Moth, Coney Mead, SK15 1HE; Alun George, Davison Avenue, NE26 3SY; Justin Bowin, Powers Court, TW1 2JJ; Hardip Grewal, Laburnum Grove, TW3 3LU; D Simpson, Rowan Nett Road, SP3 4HB; Lino Tanti, Ponsomby Street, Malta; Michael Nuyten, Acacia 28 4631 DA, Holland; Richard Killick, Maidstone Road, ME8 OLH; Craig Aldred, Windy Ridge, NR29 5DR; Nick Marsh, Lower Aston , CH5 3EX; Nigel Monlouis, Manbey Park Road, E15 1EY; John M Lewis, Oaklands, SA14 8DL; Andrew Rumsby, Lan Yon Road, TR3 6HF; Kevin Lloyd, Bryn Hyfryd, LL55 3DU; Paul Fulcher, Lowenva Hale Road, IP25 7AX

ADVENTURE CHART WRITE-IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

TOP 30 FOR MARCH



1	*(2)*	**ELITE**	Firebird
2	*(28)*	**COMMANDO**	Elite
3	*(6)*	**STARQUAKE**	Bubble Bus
4	*(1)*	**WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST**	Melbourne
5	*(4)*	**FAIRLIGHT**	The Edge
6	*(7)*	**BACK TO SKOOL**	Microsphere
7	*(8)*	**HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER**	Vortex
8	*(5)*	**HYPERSPORTS**	Imagine
9	*(15)*	**DOOMDARK'S REVENGE**	Beyond
10	*(11)*	**SPY Vs SPY**	Beyond
11	*(14)*	**GYROSCOPE**	Melbourne House
12	*(—)*	**MONTY ON THE RUN**	Gremlin Graphics
13	*(—)*	**SABOTEUR**	Durell
14	*(10)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	Beyond
15	*(—)*	**MATCHDAY**	Ocean
16	*(20)*	**MARSPORT**	Gargoyle Games
17	*(26)*	**ROBIN O' THE WOOD**	Odin
18	*(—)*	**SPELLBOUND**	Mastertronic
19	*(9)*	**NIGHTSHADE**	Ultimate
20	*(24)*	**ALIEN 8**	Ultimate
21	*(27)*	**SKOOLDAZE**	Microsphere
22	*(—)*	**ROLLER COASTER**	Elite
23	*(13)*	**DYNAMITE DAN**	Mirrorsoft
24	*(—)*	**ENIGMA FORCE**	Beyond
25	*(—)*	**TOMAHAWK**	Digital Integration
26	*(29)*	**STARION**	Melbourne House
27	*(19)*	**NODES OF YESOD**	Odin
28	*(—)*	**SWEEVO's WORLD**	Gargoyle Games
29	*(—)*	**GUNFRIGHT**	Ultimate
30	*(—)*	**DALEY THOMPSON's DECATHLON**	Ocean

What a mover! **Elite** certainly had a runaway success this Christmas with COMMANDO — sproinging up no less than twenty six places in this month's chart to fill the Number Two spot. 1986 could prove a good year for Elite: ROLLER COASTER is one of the ten new entries this month, arriving at Number Twenty Two. Highest new entry is **Mastertronic**'s SPELLBOUND: Magic Knight casts a spell to get himself into the Eighteenth hole. SPY HUNTER has ended its brief flirtation with the charts — in at seventh slot at Christmas it slid to the twelve level last month and now disappears — to return again?

On the Hotline front, it's **Simon Spear** of Meadow Road, Toddington, LU5 6BB who will soon have the £40 of free software for the March Chart. CRASH Hat and T Shirt winners are: **David Griffiths**, Bolton Road, Wigan, WN4 8TG; **B Davies**, Millside, Staffs, WV5 8JJ; **Neil McDowall**, Ashfield House, Salisbury, SP2 7EG,not forgetting **Willis Aitken**, Swiss Avenue, Chelmsford, CM1 2AF. YOU could win next month if you get your votes in!

The CRASH HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart — for Spectrum Software, at least. The chart depends entirely on your support and we need your votes in order to produce the analysis of who's playing what.

Nowadays, there's only ONE WAY to submit your votes — and that's by post. Towards the back of the magazine, lurking very close to the competition results bit, you'll find a couple of coupons that you can use to send us your votes. If you're really unkeen on cutting up your magazine, you could always use a photocopy, or copy out the details on the forms onto a plain piece of paper.

Whatever you do, get those voting forms in. Every month we draw out a total of ten winning forms after the charts

ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



Level 9 go for the top this month, moving up nine places to perch LORDS OF TIME in the top hole. Once again the Adventure Chart is dominated by a select few companies, with **Melbourne House** getting the lion's share with no less than five entries. LORD OF THE RINGS arrives at a respectable nine — the highest new entry this month. SWORDS AND SORCERY from **PSS**, another new one for the chart, is also doing well, judging by its rank of twelve. OUT OF THE SHADOWS by **Mizar** simply refuses to stay out of the charts for long, reappearing at twenty nine this time.

1 *(10)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9
2 *(5)* **MARSPORT** Gargoyle Games
3 *(13)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
4 *(3)* **FOURTH PROTOCOL** Century
5 *(4)* **DOOMDARK's REVENGE** Beyond
6 *(7)* **RED MOON** Level 9
7 *(17)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
8 *(23)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
9 *(—)* **LORD OF THE RINGS** Melbourne House
10 *(22)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
11 *(19)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
12 *(—)* **SWORDS AND SORCERY** PSS
13 *(16)* **FRANKIE** Ocean
14 *(8)* **TERRORMOLINOS** Melbourne House
15 *(14)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
16 *(21)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
17 *(28)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
18 *(12)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
19 *(27)* **VALHALLA** Legend
20 *(2)* **BORED OF THE RINGS** Silversoft
21 *(—)* **NEVER ENDING STORY** Ocean
22 *(29)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd
23 *(—)* **VALKYRIE 17** The Ram Jam Corporation
24 *(18)* **HAMPSTEAD** Melbourne House
25 *(30)* **ADRIAN MOLE** Level 9/Mozaic
26 *(24)* **THE HULK** Adventure International
27 *(26)* **KENTILLA** Micromega
28 *(—)* **ENIGMA FORCE** Beyond
29 *(—)* **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
30 *(—)* **ROBIN OF THE WOOD** Odin

This month, £40 of software goes to **Steve Whitehall**, of Spring Lane Milton Keynes. Runners up in the Adventure trail draw who pick up a CRASH Hat and T shirt are as follows: **Richard Hall** of Tamworth, B77 2JP; **M J Beck** from Sheffield, S10 3FJ; **Philip Carney**, of Braisegate, Skelton, CA11 9SQ and **Paul Reeves** (no relation to Superman!) of Regent Drive, Bournemouth.



have been compiled, five for each chart, and prizes go whizzing off to the lucky senders of those forms. The first form out of the sack of Hotline votes, like the first one to come out of the Adventure voting box, wins its sender £40 worth of software of his or her choice. And a CRASH T Shirt, of course.

The next four voting slips for each chart, that's eight voters in all, win a T Shirt and Cap. Don't miss out on your chance to win all these goodies for the cost of a 17p stamp and the time it takes to put pen and your opinions to paper. CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL are what we call the giant boxes that your votes go into, and they can be reached via PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.





LLOYD MANGRAM'S HALL OF SLIME



Even more gore this month . . . will it increase as Slimesters get their hands on the 128K Spectrum? Will bigger games mean bigger high scores? But enough if this idle speculation — I'm off to clean my new 1938 Hermes. Virtually everyone else in the office has now got their very own word processor but I settled for a Hermes upgrade. At least that Robin Candy can't sabotage MY disks — Hermes never made a disk drive! Let the Slime commence . . .

Harrier Attack 32,650
Jetpack 131,560
Spyhunter 103,650
Chuckie Egg 252,110
Paul Stableford, Charlton, Nottingham

Gunfright Third bandit dead
Back to Skool Released bike
Fighting Warrior Into temple
Monty on the Run 8,500
Match Day Unbeaten
Basketball Level 5, Imagine version
I, of the Mask Half robot
Commando 3rd stage
Daniel Garcia, Edgeware, Middlesex

Monty on the Run 7,500 Completed
Dynamite Dan 7 sticks
Minder 6,985
Exploding Fist 10th Dan 330,600
Frank Bruno Completed
Nodes of Yesod 78%
Match Point Beat computer on all levels
Ghostbusters Easily completed
Paul Whiteley, Lytham, Lancs.

Raid Over Moscow 203,650, 8 pilots left
Match Day Beaten on all levels
World Series Baseball Won on levels 1, 2 and 3
Trans Am Completed
Commando 53,800 level 3
Trashman Completed
Philip Kelly, Monk Fryston, Leeds.

Winter Games Ski Jump 218.8, Hot Dog 9.2, Speed Skating 39.8 seconds, Figure Skating 2.4, Biathalon 1.38 mins, Bobsleigh 25.84 secs, Free Skating 7.2
Richard Allen, Poringland, Norwich

Bruce Lee Killed 15 wizards
Zzoom 498,650; 360 people saved
Atic Atac 93%
Danger Mouse Completed twice

Ant Attack 48,648
Chuckie Egg Level 15
Knight Lore Completed
Harrier Attack Completed
Everyone's A Wally Completed
Wheelie Completed
Big Jan, Queens Ave, Dorchester, Dorset

Nightshade 64%, 144,000, completed
Sabre Wulf Completed
Lunar Jetman Level 7
Frank N Stein Level 10
Match Day 9-0 in 5 minutes
Knight Lore 10 objects
'Mad' Philip Vickers, Alford, Lincs

Airwolf Completed
Knight Lore Completed 100%
Pyjamarama Completed 98%
Chequered Flag Brands Hatch, 1:10:40
Nodes of Yesod 75% Nearly done
Starstrike 1,660,400 on easy
Nightshade Killed two monsters 42%
Highway Encounter Completed Highway 1
Jonathon Clithorse, Lockton, Pickering, N Yorks

Timegate 9,304
Highway Encounter 31,850
Deathchase 127,489
Glass 72,500
TLL 26,910
Tribble Trouble 10,980
Bryan O'Rourke, Ullapool, Ross-Shire

Ugh! 20,175
Hunchback II Completed
Mr Wimpy 69,160
Finders Keepers Completed
Spectipede 30,870
Tribble Trouble 12,490
Andrew Clover, Holmer Green, High Wycombe





Commando 128,600
Shadowfire Completed
Highway Encounter Zone 2
Urban Upstart Completed
Atic Atac Completed
Fighter Pilot Blind landing
Stonkers Completed all levels
Andrew Staniford, Chesterfield, Derby

Alien 8 12 Cryogenic chambers
Robin 'o the Wood Got sword, bow and one magic arrow
Critical Mass Completed on medium
Starquake 214,000ish, 68%
Frankie GTH 85%; BANG!
Mooncresta 24,120
Sweevo's World 8% **Spellbound** 23%
Alexander Zivkovic, Swiss Cottage, London

Kokotoni Wilf Completed twice
Horace Goes Skiing Down slope 6 times
Ghostbusters 103,950
Manic Miner Completed with POKES
3D Deathchase Sector 9
Mountains of Ket 99%
Transversion 10,500 Level 12
Penetrator Over 1 million
Booty 22 items
Skool Daze 10,000
Knight Lore 2 Charms
Fighting Warrior 13,000
Boulder Dash Level N from start
Rockford's Riot Level I from start
Lee Madden, Slough, Berkshire.

Bruce Lee Completed 16 times
Exploding Fist Beat 10th Dan 7 times
Ghostbusters Completed
Rocco Beat computer
Lords of Midnight Completed
Dynamite Dan 3 Sticks of Dynamite
Fighting Warrior 98,500
Knight Lore 4 Charms
Commando Level 4, 877,857
Gift from the Gods Completed
Sabre Wulf Completed
Kern Liang and Kern Siang, Singapore

Finders Keepers Completed with £1,087
Technician Ted 19 Tasks
Pyjamarama 98% with three lives
Everyone's a Wally Completed £2,746
Jet Set Willy II 35 rooms found
Highway Encounter completed twice 137,890
Glen Ferguson, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear



Matchpoint Thrashed at all levels
Exploding Fist 10th Dan 84,200
Spy Vs Spy Sky high spy
Wheelie All that bounces
Manic Miner Completed
Atic Attack Completed
Frank Bruno's Boxing Beaten Frenchie
Commando 78,400
Shadowfire Completed
Spellbound 46% completed
Underwurlde 78% completed
Bruce Lee Completed 18 times
Saboteur Completed on level 7, blew up warehouse
Martin Stevens, Whitfield, Dover

Match Day Won final 7-1
Chuckie Egg 162,450
Atic Atac Completed
Full Throttle 2nd on every track
Hall of the Things 722; 5 rings, 41 things
A Day in the Life 41,793
Maziacs Completed
Philip Redman, Roker, Sunderland

Nightshade Completed 76%
Yie ar Kung Fu 86,500 Grandmaster
Rambo 053900; Mission completed
Saboteur Escaped with disk and bomb set
Exploding Fist 103,100
Psytraxx 4,140; 40%
Glass Starfighter
Pogo 32,125
Cauldron Collected frog and pot
Mugsy 38%
Atic Atac Completed
Stuart Lambert and Lee Stevenson

Back to Skool Completed
Atic Atac 85%
Nightshade 63,000
Airwolf 3 Men saved
Mark Barrett, Loughborough, Leics

Wizard's Lair 63%; 3 pieces of Lion
Shadow of the Unicorn 12%
Gyroscope 3,220
Critical Mass 26,144
Mikie 73,900
Elite Dangerous
Kung Fu Blackbelt
Stop the Express 4 Times
Trashman 24,223
Full Throttle 7th Silverstone
Rambo 36,300
Tapper Space Bar
Saboteur Completed 1st level
Richard Barnett, Loughborough, Leics

Tapper 4,800,700
Zzoom 128,130
Highway Encounter 41,830
Trans Am 17 Cups
Galaxians 101,100
Stop the Express Stopped twice
Caterpillar 16,600
TLL 7,620
Trashman 10,620
Marcus Kozworth, Lyndon Close, Perry Barr

World Series Baseball 37-0
Rat Race Completed
Gunfright Sundance Kid
Sabrewulf Completed
Grand National First
Raid Over Moscow Completed
Zaxxon Completed
Jon Whyke, Hoyland Common Barnsley

Booty 31 items
Byte Bitten 3,770 (4th guest)
Don't Buy This Fido 2,390, Race Ace 9th (out of 9)
Only Rock and Roll 53 points
Kosmic Kanga The ocean
Bryn Holmes, Rugeley, Staffordshire

Starquake 128,565; 44% with 3 parts of core
Marsport 32% active
Nightshade 965,284
Bruce Lee Completed 8 times
David McComb, Ballymena, Co Antrim

WIN

Crash Competition



YOUR VERY OWN WAR TOAD

The trials and tribulations faced by Cosmic Wartoad on his quest to save his queen from the horrid Sludge Saw are well documented on pages 136 and 137 of this issue. THAT is the review, THIS is the competition. Tadpole Willy has to help the Toad amongst Toads cross the time void, so it seemed only appropriate to offer you another grid — this time one full of letters rather than time vacuums. Find the words listed below in the grid, complete the entry form and post it off to WARTOAD COMP, CRASH PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive by 27th of March and you could be one of the lucky winners who will receive their very own free copy of *Cosmic Wartoad*. Gerronwithit!

50 copies of Cosmic Wartoad up for grabs!

FIND THESE WORDS:

DENTONDESIGNS
COSMIC
WARTOAD
LILYPAD
TOADS
SLIME
TIMEVOID
SAW
ZIPPO
LIGHTER
TOOL
KIT

M	I	C	A	R	T	H	A	R	S	M	I	C	K
B	V	O	P	P	I	Z	B	A	N	P	P	I	Z
S	E	S	F	R	I	G	H	T	G	T	T	N	Y
O	O	M	H	X	W	B	E	M	I	L	S	I	K
L	I	L	Y	P	A	D	V	Y	S	I	O	V	L
L	J	K	O	W	S	M	I	C	E	G	T	O	N
P	I	Z	I	A	Z	D	O	K	D	H	O	D	E
O	I	G	V	R	A	E	N	T	N	T	L	S	C
A	M	K	H	O	K	S	D	A	O	T	I	C	I
D	A	P	T	T	I	Z	N	W	T	H	L	O	M
S	X	R	Y	L	E	D	T	N	N	O	Y	O	S
S	A	M	L	U	Y	R	S	A	E	I	P	P	O
W	I	T	I	M	E	V	O	I	D	J	A	D	C

NAME ....

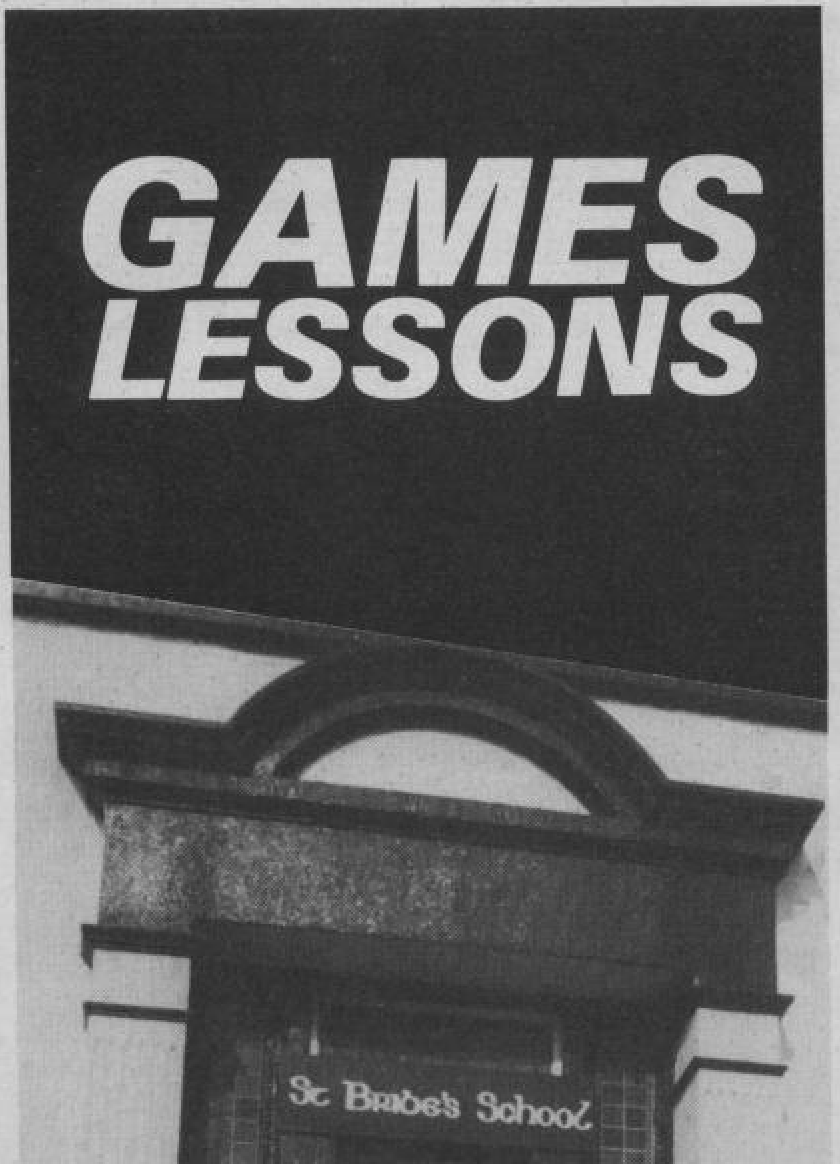
ADDRESS ....

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.... POST CODE ....

The story so far: Hunter S Minson, in Ireland courtesy of *New Concepts Software*, to cover the launch of their sport simulation, SURF CHAMP, has realised that a swell of four inches does not make good surfing, so has leapt into a passing hire car in search of diversion. Now read on . . .

GAMES LESSONS



MARIANNE SCARLETT, the headmistress at the door of ST BRIDES

We were just outside Rossnowlagh on the Atlantic coast when the Guinness began to take hold. Sitting in the middle of the back seat and surrounded by journalists from competing publications I felt like the Mafia were taking me for a long drive to a concrete surfboard. All I could rely on was that they seemed friendly and nobody had tried to throw me out as we reached speed along the coast road.

Somehow the idea had hit all five of us simultaneously. Timmy the Dog had pricked up his ears at the first mention of a ripping yarn. Here we were in County Donegal, not a sparrow's spit from that fabled seat of learning, St Brides. Now St Brides boasts a secret. Were we not the hard bitten investigative journalists to uncover that conundrum?

There is something about Irish geography that defies all known concepts of distance. Burtonport, home of the Games Mistresses, may have looked close on the map but the journey was tortuous in the extremes. A trek through towns where there seemed to be at least one cleric for every lay person. But at last we rolled into the tiny fishing village and drew up outside a house which recalled strange memories. If Tony Perkins had appeared at the door brandishing a knife and dressed as his mother, I wouldn't have been Psycho-ed out!

Our welcome was decidedly un-scary but no less weird. Perhaps those winding Irish lanes had worked their leprechaun magic and we'd slipped back through time. There were no electric lights in the place; the maid who answered the door was surely not of this decade. Could this really be the place where some of the more inventive Quilled adventures were being programmed? Perhaps my name was Trixie Trinian after all. No steady on — it was either too much Guinness, or too little.

Then, as we sat in the gift shop with its crafts from many nations, the door opened and in swept the headmistress herself, Marianne Scarlett, dressed in a pink twin set. As she told us later, she'd resisted the temptation to get dressed up, by which she meant the gown she wears in her educational role. But this was hardly London street clothes, so spill the beans Marianne — what is St Brides?

First there was the building, and that has had its past, providing a safe house for IRA men more than 50 years ago. Then, more recently there were the Screamers, a group who believed in the efficacy of letting all go in a Primal Scream, and who were virtually banished from the tiny village by local talk and sensational press interest. After which St Brides moved in, establishing the school in April '84.

This is probably not the sort of school that you'd go to though, because the young ladies of St B's are past the age of compulsory education, from their 20's upwards. And they go there for a week at a time, maybe more, to wear a uniform, sleep in a dorm, to take lessons and obey the rules, all without the creature comforts of 1985.

"They spend 24 hours a day living in a different time, living a different life. We give people a different experience of living as themselves." Marianne's background is both teaching and humanistic psychology and this is far more than a theme holiday hotel; as an experiment in human behaviour it's "fascinating". St Brides works because the pupils are never given the chance to do anything but live the imaginary 1920/30's era.

Select advertisments bring in each fresh intake of eight, who pay around £120 a week for the privilege of indulging in things most of us are only too happy to escape. Marianne greets each new girl and pretty soon one will be chosen who shows a desire to be leader, and she will become the prefect. But according to Marianne most are only too glad to give up the responsibilities of their adult world and are delighted at "having an excuse not to be grown up." Remember this next time you laugh at somebody who tells you that your schooldays are the happiest days of your life.

This world of lessons — and the 'pupils' do have to study the basics of maths and languages — may seem rather crazy, but some people get their jollies dressing in chain mail made from coat hangers and killing orcs with cardboard axes. Once you've sat in that slightly damp room, listening to scratchy records played on a wind-up gramophone under the stern gaze of Marianne Scarlett, you can understand how easy it is to get lost in the game. One who did just that is Priscilla Langridge. She committed the unthinkable sin of introducing a micro into this time warp.

Marianne was at first rather taken aback by the anachronistic intrusion. "My experience has always been looking back in time." But it didn't take long before she realised that unlike television, which she thinks is

John Minson



A pupil's eye view of MARIANNE SCARLETT in a ST BRIDES classroom

passive and mind rotting, computers "call for 100% concentration and commitment. They're not just playing with a joystick." So, about a year and a half ago part of St Brides entered the modern world, though they've been known to do their computing by candle light.

Priscilla was a writer long before fate, or more probably an advertisment, brought her to the west coast of Ireland. Hardly a computer expert at that stage, she looked upon the micro as another medium, like books or comics, to be exploited as a rich experience — rather like the school. In fact the *Secret of St Brides*, their first adventure, set in the corridors and dormitories of the house, then out onto the cliffs, came from a game that they would play as they took the pupils on rambles. A mystery would be created from a few bare facts found as they walked along the shore.

Selling at first by mail order only, via a suggestive show of stocking tops and school uniform, *Secret* sold well enough to gather some good reviews and cement a proper distribution deal. It's very much a standard *Quilled* product in form, though Priscilla claims to "like the economy of the two word input. People make a fetish of excess sophistication." Its main strength lies in Priscilla's writing skills, which are both witty and atmospheric.

Secret is also refreshingly different — there's not an orc or an elf in sight. And it casts you in the role of a female character, though neither woman sees herself as carrying out a crusade for women in computing. "We're not setting out with a market in mind", Marianne tells me. Priscilla adds "We want the games to be open and accessible, to appeal to adventurers of both sexes."

Spurred on by their success, the Games Mistresses, as they styled themselves, set to work on *The Snow Queen*, intended to be the first of a series of tie-ins with books in which it's hoped that facsimilie editions will accompany the game. *Snow Queen* is based on a classic, dark fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen in which a girl seeks to save her brother whose view of life has been corrupted by a fragment of a mirror made by the devil. With it, the programming has become more sophisticated, so that Gerda appears to have a will of her own when it comes to obeying instructions.

The next project takes the mixing of media a stage further as *St Brides* originate their own comic books which will tie in with games. *Wonder Girl* is a super heroine in the classic mode, with lots of in jokes for comic fans. *Silverwolf* is a more traditional adventure, and from the sample pages that Priscilla handed round it's obvious that both are being done with an eye to comics being adult and arty. Once again, there are scantily clad females and subtexts of sexuality. "Computers and comics are both unusual media for presenting fantasies."

So we are given a tour of the studies, the classrooms, and the spartan, though bright dormitories of this place where fantasies can be realised. But questions remain unanswered, the programming room remains unshown, and a whole area of the house, the old servants quarters joining the school by just one door, stays a mystery.

My head is clearing and all I feel is that I'd like another drink. It comes as a surprise that if we didn't have to charge back to the surf, Marianne and Priscilla would happily take us down to their local. And what do the villagers make of the latest inhabitants of a house with an odd history? "The Irish like anybody who is enterprising," Marianne says, adding that coverall for a good scheme, plan or wheeze, "a bit of a crack."

So now I know that the place does exist, and it isn't some clever hype. I know that Marianne and Priscilla are most charming hostesses and I know that they are fully capable of playing a seductive game of the imagination. But should I be surprised? All good fiction draws us in so that we live it to some degree.

Marianne and Priscilla and presumably the programmers we were told about but never saw, they are all busy realising the philosophy of *St Brides* as a centre for fantasy and fun. Let Priscilla have the last word. "We do things that are fun. If it stops being fun we stop it." ●



MARIANNE SCARLETT of ST BRIDES demonstrates a hand cranked disk drive . . .

PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!

STEPPING A FEW WITH QUICKSILVA

Twenty minutes into the future Edison Carter pauses . . . The two hundred and ten storey Network 23 tower block looms menacingly down from the skies, blackened with industrial waste.

Network 23 is a hugely successful TV company which leads the ratings owing to the introduction of *Blipverts* — the commercial innovation which compresses three minutes of adverts into thirty seconds, giving viewers no chance to switch channels. However, *Blipverts* have an appalling side effect on inactive viewers, causing them to spontaneously combust. Network 23 ignored this unfortunate side-effect, and Edison Carter, top TV reporter, tried to expose the facts. Grossman, head of Network 23 decided that Edison Carter would have to be assassinated.

In an attempt to cover up the killing, Network 23's techno-wizard, Bryce Lynch, copied Edison's brain pattern onto a computer while he was unconscious — thus effectively synthesising Edison Carter's personality. Edison managed to escape Grossman's hired killers, Breughel and Mahler, and Network 23 lost the *Max Personality Generator*, Edison's synthesised personality.

With the help of his controller, Theora Jones, Edison Carter brought the full story, live and direct, to the public . . . The film, TWENTY MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE ends. The computer game begins — Edison Carter wants to retrieve his own personality, held captive by Network 23 who have regained the Max Personality Generator.

Just a little more than twenty minutes into the future Edison prepares to enter the Network 23 building . . .

The security system is certainly a complex one, but Theora's *Maxhunter* program should give some help to cracking the codes. The first task is to get access to

---

Crash Competition

AND NOW... MAX HEADROOM, The Competition!



So you've seen him on T.T.T.T.V..T.T.V; the only presenter on cathode ray to get a job in spite of a sp.sp.sp. speech impedi..pediment. Max Headroom's the multi-media megastar who hosts a telly show, appears in a film, has written a book and is now the subject of a computer game — thanks to those Quicksilva people who have come up with Max Headroom, the game.

Even if you've seen the film, TWENTY MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE, playing the game isn't going to be a piece of cake. Dead tricky in fact: from what this Minion's seen so far Max Headroom the game is going to keep quite a few ardent gamesters busy for a good while. To give CRASH readers the chance to get a bit of background material together, Quicksilva have decided to give away an all-expenses paid day out to the studio and edit suite where the Max Headroom graphics are created. The lucky winner of the main prize in the Max Comp will also get a MAX MEGAPACK containing the Max Headroom Video, a signed copy of 'The Max Headroom Guide to Life' along with the book of the film and a signed copy of 'Creative Computer Graphics' by Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton. And, just in case you get cold on the train back, there's a T shirt thrown in too!

Five more MAX MEGAPACKs are on offer to runners up, and ten MAX MINIPACKS are waiting to be sent through the post to some more winners. They contain a signed copy of the Guide to Life, the book of the film and a T shirt.

To enter, all you have to do (snigger, snigger) is re-assemble Breughel and Mahler, who have unfortunately been Blipverted by an advert for self-cleaning knuckle dusters. Then write or draw a Blipvert for any product you care to dream up. Keep the copy explosive, Okay?

Whizz your Blipvert Bag containing your entry to BLIPVERT, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 27th March, the Day of Judgement. Maxwise.



ENTRY FORM

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

POST CODE .... ***T SHIRT SIZE*** ....

VIDEO OWNED (VHS / BETA) ....

MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE



The LED game which you have to play to gain control of the lift, in MAX HEADROOM, the game. The central screen is where the action takes place and control icons are grouped round it

the lift and ascend to the executive levels of the building — floors 200 to 209. This is done by short circuiting the LED display in the lift. If, by the time the power runs down, an **E** remains







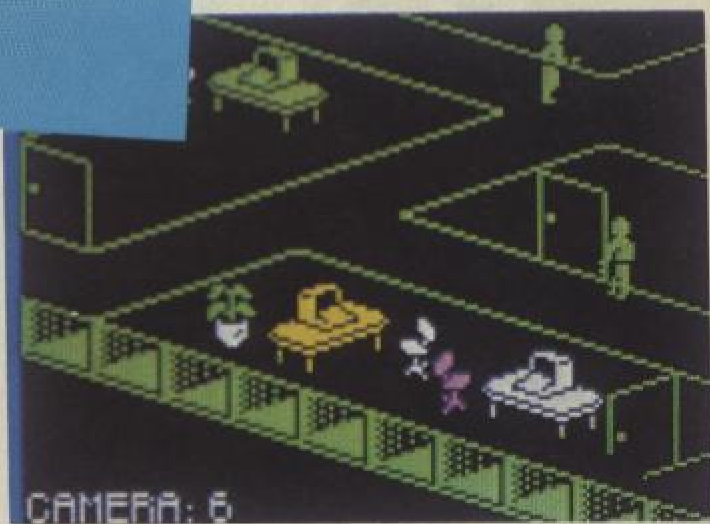
on display then Theora wins control of the lift. You have to follow the sequence of glowing LED controllers with a cursor, pressing fire when they glow to light up the display.

The next task is to crack the security codes on the executive level so Theora can control the camera systems, lifts and open/close the doors on each of the levels. In the floor game the security system flashes a series of four lights and accompanies them with four notes. Edison must repeat the series, only in the reverse order to win control of the floor. If Edison fails to beat the system then his search throughout the executive levels is made extremely difficult because Theora can't scan for security guards or access the information computer.

If Edison wins control, then the search for the codes to the President's suite on the 210th floor can begin in earnest. Using the information computer and with Theora's guidance Edison must find four pairs of hexadecimal digits — the Director's codes — before he can gain access to Level 210.

This is the level where Max is held, but again, more codes have to be broken before Max can be taken from the laboratory on the same level. If Edison rescues Max the game isn't over — he has to leave the building before Max is truly his.

The whole game is played against the clock — Edison only has until six in the morning to complete the rescue, otherwise the workers return and overpower him. Icons are used to control the program, although there is dynamic control over Edison throughout the search. Edison Carter's confidence takes knocks when he is assaulted by the guards or fails to crack a code — a readout on the bottom



Camera Six gives a view onto one of the floors in Network 23's building. Edison scampers round looking for codes and avoiding the guards while Ms Jones, his controller, gives him all the help she can.



of the screen indicates his confidence level. It's possible for Edison to regain confidence by resting in one of the offices on a floor, but the penalty is time . . .

Edison's mission is dangerous — there are a lot of vested interests involved in the Max Headroom affair — he's a ratings winner, after all. Breughel and Mahler and scores of security guards try to track Edison down and eliminate him, and if he's not careful he could end up at the *body bank*, a futuristic morgue.

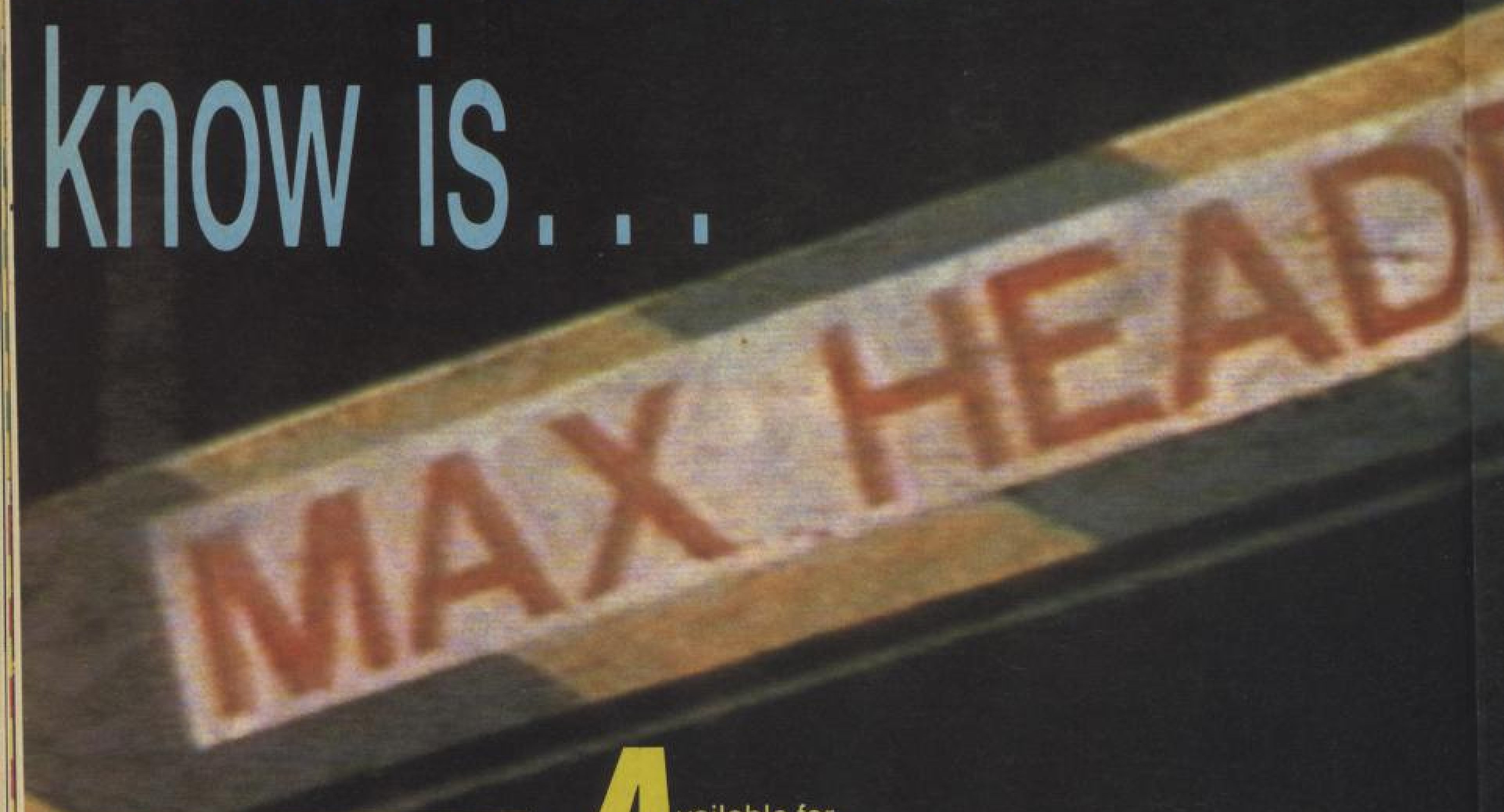
If Edison manages to pull of the rescue then the player is rewarded with a special treat . . . details of which we won't reveal just yet, but there's a whole Spectrum memoryful of goodies waiting for you if you rescue Max!

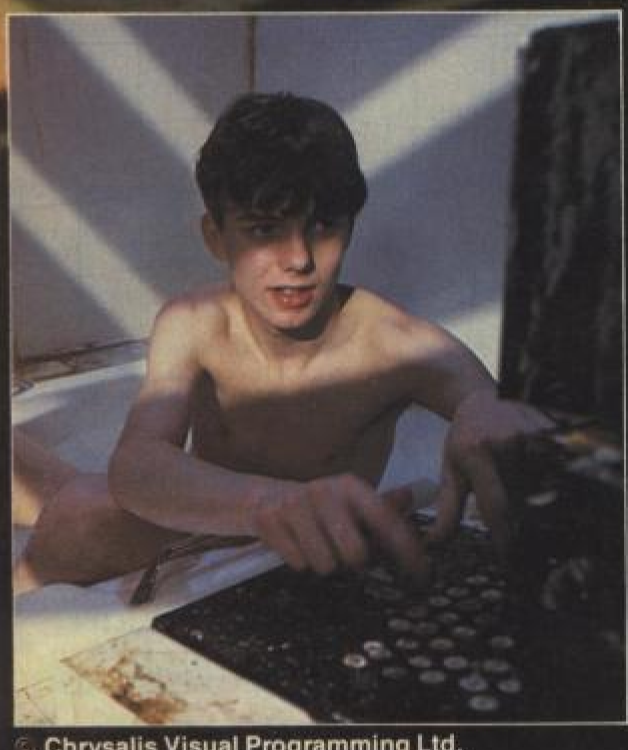






What I want to know is. . .





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. . . why would anyone play anything else?

In the Christmas Special, we invited readers to imagine they were making entries in their Letts diary in the year 2186. The competition, sponsored by Letts, produced a crop of imaginative entries and lot of copies of the Letts Computer Users diary for 1986 were given away. Top of the pile, was ROBERT NORTON's entry, which was passed round the office in a chorus of chuckles.

Robert picked up a set of Letts Revision Software for his pains, as well as a diary — and we thought his work deserved a wider audience. So here it is, two hundred years into the future — with apologies to a more contemporary diarist, Adrian Mole . . .

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2186

JANUARY 1ST 2186

Received this diary for Xmas. Bit disappointed as I really wanted a hover-cycle. Dad said that in his day you were lucky if you got a second-hand Commodore computer for Christmas. Looked up Commodore in Lord Mangrams' long word dictionary. Apparently it's a military rank. You could probably only buy them from Army and Navy stores.

JANUARY 3rd

Spent my software token that Auntie Janet gave me for Xmas. Bought a strategy/arcade/adventure game called "The Space Shuttle War". Dad said that it was in bad taste coming so soon after the real thing, and that people had complained about it on TV. It shot straight to number 2 in the charts a week later. The holographics are amazing, the best I've ever seen on the Spectrum Super. It's incredible what they cram into 2000K these days.

FEBRUARY 13th

What a boring day. I don't think that it's stopped acid raining since I got up this morning. The only bit of excitement was when Tibby came running in from the back yard. Mum told me to put the cat out, but the fire extinguisher wouldn't work. She had to throw a bucket of water over him instead. He hasn't stopped steaming since. Personally, I think we should buy a Robo-Pet. At least they're acid-rain proof.

FEBRUARY 20th

School started again today. Depressing. My new form tutor is ancient. The headmaster says that they just can't afford to buy new androids every year, so we'll have to make do with the older, 'but more experienced' ones. Old isn't the word. He looks like he's pre-Sinclair. My mate Dave's new teacher is the latest model, with built-in 3D projector and positronic humour circuit. I'm not sure what a humour circuit is. Maybe he giggles when handing out lines!

MARCH 3rd

Got into Mum and Dad's bad books today. I forgot that they were in the room and let fly with a filthy word. Mind you, I had a good reason to: the final of the Indoor International Tiddlywinks Championship was on TV, and was just reaching the deciding winks when the stupid cat went and bit through the solar power lines. The power went out, the cat lit up and I jumped to my feet angrily shouting out, 'OH, Tebb it!!' I realised my mistake immediately. Dad went crazy. Mum, who had been in the process of throwing her non-alcoholic cider over the smoking moggy, span round towards me, sending a spray of non-alcoholic cider over the room. I was ordered to my bedroom without any protein tablets and told never to say such vile words again. I wouldn't mind, but I don't even know what it means! Well, at least they can't stop me writing it in my diary. Grown-ups! They can all get Thatchered as far as I'm concerned!

MARCH 21st

Went on a school trip to Ludlow today. We visited the building that originally housed the Newsfield Publishing empire. In the town centre there is a plasti-bronze statue of Sir Lloyd Mangram. 'Did he really wear a paper bag over his head or is that just what they call Artistic Licence?' I asked 'Old Rustbucket', my form tutor, but he didn't know. He did say that Lord Mangram was one of the few famous people who never had their likeness captured on canvas or celluloid. Him and Jack The Ripper.

APRIL 13th

Pirated Dave's copy of "Mega-Galactic Mice From Mars" today. Took six hours just to type in the POKE. I got a little worried when the Software Protection Chip in my Spectrum flashed a warning that it was about to self-destruct, and that I had 30 seconds to leave the vicinity of the explosion. Turning the power off had no effect, as it immediately switched to its reserve battery, but I managed to stop the countdown with a wad of chewing gum and a corn plaster. Two seconds from meltdown! Phew! Mind you, it was worth it just to see the cat running around after the holographic Meta-Galactic Mice. Well, hobbling around would be a better description, what with the bandages and all.

APRIL 22nd

Got picked on by the school bully this morning. He trapped me in a corner of the playground and threatened to throw acid-rain in my face unless I gave him my protein pill money. I only had a hundred and fifty Euro-dollars on me, so it could have been worse. Revenge is forthcoming. I've asked Dave to lend the bully "Mega-Galactic Mice" and a copy of the POKE. So, provided that he doesn't have any chewing gum or corn plasters lying around, he may become a big noise in the neighbourhood.

MAY 4th

The cat has gone missing — again. This frequently happens. The last time, it had gotten its tail caught in the rear bumper of a hover car, and was dragged for 50 miles up the M996 before the driver heard the screams. Luckily the address tag that all licensed domestic animals must wear was still attached to his collar, and he was returned to us minus one life, half of his fur coat and any dignity that he may have had left. My Dad says that black cats have always been thought unlucky, and that Tibby is a prime example. What he seems to forget is that the cat was originally as white as snow, but has slowly, over the years, been charred to its present condition.

MAY 18th

The cat has returned — battered and bandaged. It appears that the foolish creature attempted to mate with a Robo-Cat a few blocks away. Sparks flew, Tibby flew, and so did his address tag. It took some time for the owners of the mechanical mouser to find the tag among the plasti-grass in their back garden, hence the delay in the cat's return. Dad is being sued for the price of one Robo-Cat and a patch of melted synthetic lawn. The topic of Tibby's sexual proclivities is carefully avoided when I'm around, no doubt to save my parents from embarrassing explanations. At times like these I'm glad I had the foresight to bug their bedroom.

JUNE 10th

Old Rustbucket dragged the class to a boring old museum today. In the music section they demonstrated the forerunners of holodiscs, things called 'records'. Just bits of crudely shaped plastic, which you had to scratch with a needle to make sounds. Primitive! I've heard clearer sound on an inter-planetary trunk call to Jupiter City. One item of interest though, was the body of the 'time hopping' android known as Cliff Richard. It amazes me that he escaped detection for over 150 years, pretending to be human. Nobody knows what time he 'hopped' from, as he de-activated under interrogation, but it is assumed to be a far more advanced society than ours, judging from the androids complex circuitry, which cannot be duplicated using any known methods. Personally, I don't think much of this so-called 'advanced' society, if, with so much power at their disposal, all they do with it is send back in time a bloody pop-singing robot!

JUNE 29th

Tried to discuss the political and economic aspects of the civil war on Saturn with Lynne Constable but all she wanted to do was drag me behind the hover-cycle sheds. When we got there, we found my friends Dave and Ian, smoking an illegal substance: Tobacco! They offered me something called a 'fag' and, having decided to be a man of the world I had to try it. I set fire to one end, sucked on the other, breathed in, coughed, choked violently, finally managed to look at my friends and said 'Not bad, but I've had better.' Seeing through my bravado, they then informed me that I had just smoked the filter. That made me immediately decide never to take drugs again. Anything that needs a filter on it CAN'T be good for you.



JULY 15th

Dad had a tele-link call from his brother and his family in America. My uncle emigrated there before I was born. God knows why. Practically every city is covered in a large radiation-proof dome in case there's another nuclear accident, the theory being that if one city blows up then at least the rest of the country keeps its fresh air. Bad luck for the suckers inside the dome though! Can't say I'd fancy living inside a giant bra cup myself, but then Americans are strange anyway. Spoke briefly to my cousin Chuck. Typical Yank. Talked with a mouth full of re-useable chewing gum. Dad told me later that Chuck was a test-tube baby. Interesting. I wonder if his star-sign is 'Pyrex'?

JULY 27th

The cat came into the house with a dead sparrow in its jaws this afternoon. Dad went into panic mode. With the Robo-Cat court case still pending, the last thing he needs is a charge of harming an endangered species. He chased the cat all over the house, finally catching it in the kitchen. After a small tug-of-war over the corpse, he threw the incriminating evidence into the garbage incinerator. If I had not been there, I think the cat might have followed.

AUGUST 6th

The court case has been dropped. The justice computer decided that Dad couldn't be held responsible for the maniaical nature of a cat. The cat was sentenced to the electric chair. (No, no . . . only joking). As a celebration, Dad bought Tibby a personal force field. We should have done it YEARS ago! It's fantastic. The field generator is built into an ordinary cat collar and activated with a remote switch. It stops the cat bumping into or biting things. And, more importantly, stops things hitting him. Perfect. If he gets into trouble now, I'll eat my collection of CRASH Weekly!!

AUGUST 31st

We have been discussing where to go for our family vacation week. Mum voted for South America, as it's just about the only place on Earth where you can see real trees in their natural state. Dad wanted Hawaii, (where you can see women in their natural state. Dirty old swine). I quite fancied Moonbase myself. After Dad had checked his Eurobank account, we settled on a compromise. We're going to Blackpool — again!!

SEPTEMBER 7th

Here we are in Blackpool. Again. The place never seems to change. Laser lights painting pictures in the sky, rides on the Robo-Donkey, million Euro-dollar bingo, fruit machines by the thousand and a sea-wind that blows acid-rain hats around like confetti. I once heard that the government erected a giant shield to try and reduce the force of the infamous Blackpool wind. It blew down within a week.

SEPTEMBER 14th

Returned from Blackpool to find Tibby in a terrible state. We had forgotten to switch off his personal force field before leaving, which meant that he could not get at the food from the automatic dispenser. He was starving half to death among a mountain of food on the kitchen floor. Poor thing. He's always been his own worst enemy, and now he's got us to contend with as well.

OCTOBER 3rd

The President made a national telecast today. He said that the price of solar power would be going up, due to the unusually dense clouds over the Republic of England. National reserves are at an all-time low, and rationing may soon be forced upon us. Dad got very angry and threw his cup of pseudo-coffee at the President's holographic image. He started ranting about never voting again and if he did he would vote Royalist the next time around. I can feel the government quaking in their boots at eh very thought of this. From laughter.

OCTOBER 16th

My birthday. Still no sign of a hover-cycle on the horizon. Ended up with the usual sort of presents. Software, of the potential bargain bin variety; books-("Biggles Flies Undone" and "Build Your Own Robo-Butler"), plus holodisc tokens. No party. Dad said he couldn't afford to feed the whole neighbourhood every year. Just as well I suppose, considering the cat nearly drowned in the pseudo-fruit punch last time.

NOVEMBER 5th

Bonfire night. Went to the community park to watch the firework display. A large area of plasti-grass had been cleared for the central pseudo-wood bonfire, which was lit by laser pistol. Computer controlled ignition of the firework displays ensured that all the pyrotechnic displays went off perfectly. According to my history teacher, fireworks have not always been state controlled. People were once allowed to buy them from shopping centres and set them off personally. This resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries over the years. How foolish of them.

NOVEMBER 30th

Bought my Xmas presents early this year. Got Mum a large box of vegolates (low calorie of course), and Dad's getting a pair of slippers to replace the ones that Tibby chewed to pieces last year. I've made sure that these are non-toxic as the vet hates being called out on Boxing Day. For my grandparents I've purchased some classical music (non-holographic) by Wham and Duran Duran (Yech!!). I'm playing safe and not buying the cat anything. In previous years he's had a Robo-Mouse (stuck in throat), a musical ball, (rolled into the vacuum droid, followed by Tibby) and a box of cat sweets, (got head jammed in box).

DECEMBER 14th

Put up the Christmas decorations. We dragged out the old 'auto-unfolding, pre-decorated, plastic Christmas tree' again, and the floating fairy lights worked after a bit of tweaking with the control box. The anti-tangle streamers were a bit of pain though. As usual the damn things tangled. One day I'll report them to the Trades Descriptions Committee. Mum insists on having a 'traditional' Xmas dinner, unfortunately, which means having cloned turkey, inorganic vegatables and freeze-dried gravy. I don't know why we can't have protein pills, as we do for the rest of the year. After all, eating food is merely a pagan tradition, suitable only for lower-order animals. Tradition! Humbug! (Whatever that means!)

DECEMBER 25th

Fantastic! Great! Nova-Brill! I've got my hover bike at long last. Just come back from a test run. It's like riding on air. Well, it IS riding on air, actually, but I'm too excited to bother with details. It's got everything. Fifty-speed air gears, somersault retros, programmable homing memory and emergency back-up generator. Bit tricky to control at first, in fact I nearly took the top off Mr Spilsbury's plasti-privit, but I'll soon get the hang of it. Dad said he'd teach me properly. Good old Dad!

DECEMBER 26th

Tebb it! Tebb it! Tebb it! My stupid old father just rode my hover-cycle through Mrs Pursehouse's window!! I told him to be careful but he didn't listen.I warned him that they didn't have somersault retros in his day but he just grinned and said that he could handle it. He shot off like a laser bolt, clipped a solar power pole, span ibits to give up. I must try to acquire some for next year.

CRASH COURSE



Rosetta McLeod

LETTS DO SOME REVISION

In plenty of time for this year's examinations, CRASH Course this month looks at Letts Keyfacts Revision software for O Level GCE, CSE and GCSE.

Over the years, Letts have built up a solid reputation as publishers of the highly successful Study Aid series, and have now turned their attention to the computer education market. Their Keyfacts Revision software is the result of of a great deal of research among teachers throughout the country to determine the most appropriate technique and content for computer-based learning. Letts are keen to stress that the programs are not designed merely as cramming aids for exams, but rather are planned for use throughout courses. Quite a number of large educational publishers are now producing similar types of software for a wide variety of subjects, but not all of these programs are educationally valid, and in some cases, the student would achieve better results using a good set of notes.

The Letts programs use a variety of approaches to capture the learner's interest and to introduce an element of enjoyment into home study. The major advantage of computer programs over the normal textual study aids is that they can encourage greater participation in the learning processes and improve motivation. The computer can also mark the answers and, in the case of subjects such as mathematics, can actually demonstrate various constructions and solutions. Used in conjunction with other methods, the Letts programs are extremely useful indeed. Each package contains two cassette tapes and a booklet describing the software, and retails for £11.50.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

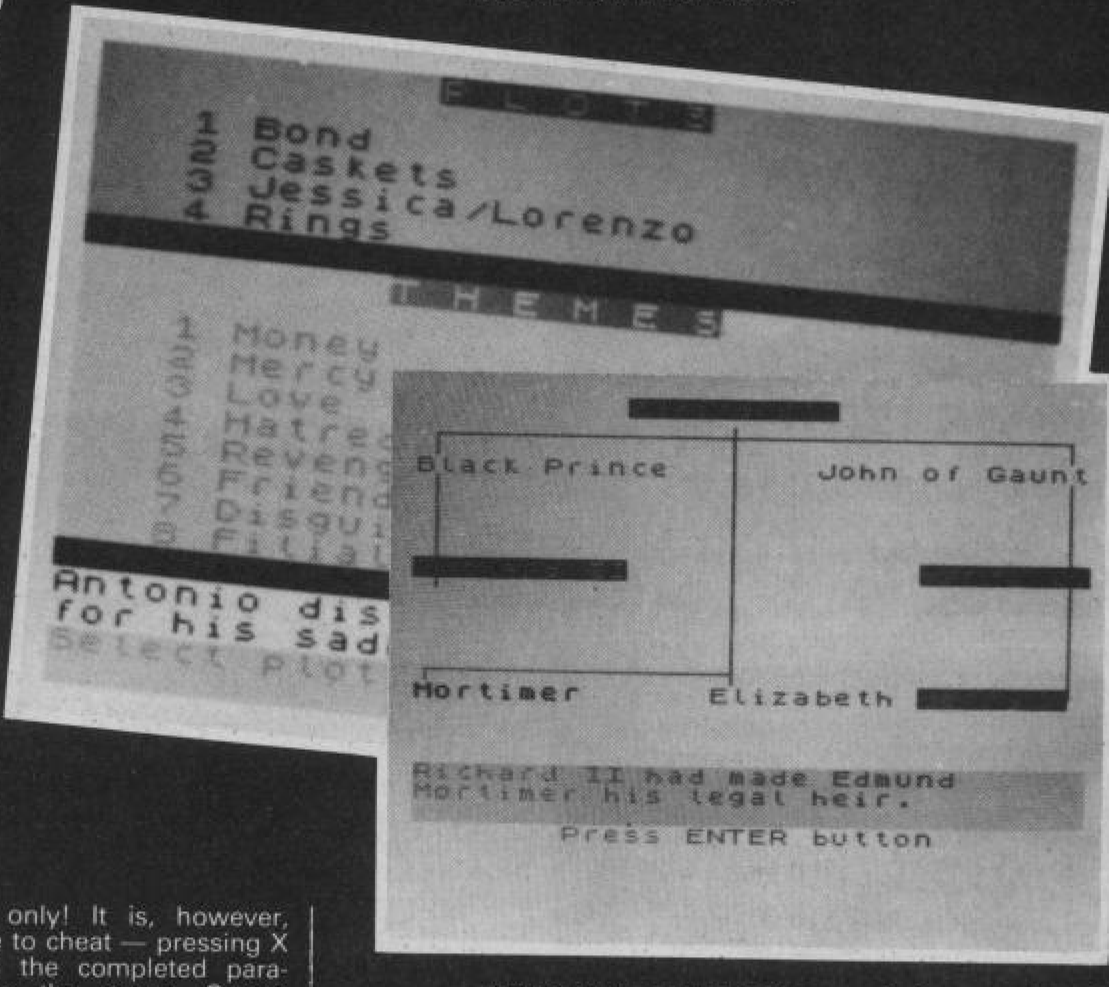
The Merchant of Venice and *Henry IV part 1*

Both of these packages provide an extremely thorough study of the play involved. The first program on *The Merchant of Venice* is concerned with linking events to plots and themes. If, for instance, the event is that 'Antonio discusses the reasons for his sadness with friends', the student has to match this with a choice of four plots and eight themes. If Money is selected as the correct theme, the computer responds by asking the student to consider the Friendship theme as well. The *Plots* program takes things a step further by presenting various events from each Act, and then asking the student to construct the play's chronological order. The final two programs, *Write* and *Quotes*, involve a very thorough knowledge of the actual text of the play. *Write* displays incomplete paragraphs taken from the play and the student has to complete them. Different levels of difficulty are available: for instance, if 'Portia and Mercy and the Law' is chosen at the easiest of the five levels of difficulty, the screen display begins, 'Disguised — Balthasar, Portia has — task of saving Antonio while upholding the law, as T---- is no power in V---- can alter — decree ----------.'

At this level the words omitted could be guessed by anyone, but at the most difficult level, the paragraph is presented in dashes only! It is, however, possible to cheat — pressing X displays the completed paragraph on the screen. *Quotes* begins by inviting the student to select a character and theme, and the computer displays the Act and Scene together with a quotation which has to be completed. Again, a cheat facility is provided, and a helpful comment is given to provoke further thought.

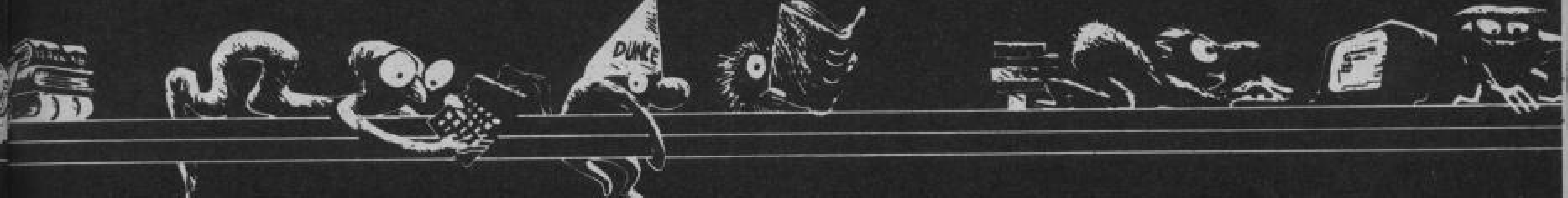
Henry IV Part 1 has similar *Write*, *Plot* and *Quote* programs, but this time begins with a 'Family Tree' task, so that the student has some appreciation of the reasons underlying the political tension in the play. The next program, *Relate*, focuses attention on the relationships between the characters, and these are displayed diagrammatically together with useful comments.

Any student working their way successfully through either of the literature packages would end up as a candidate for the black chair of 'Mastermind'.



Plots and themes explored with the Letts revision guide to THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

The family tree sprouts on screen during execution of the Letts revision program which takes Shakespeare into the computer age. HENRY V Part 1

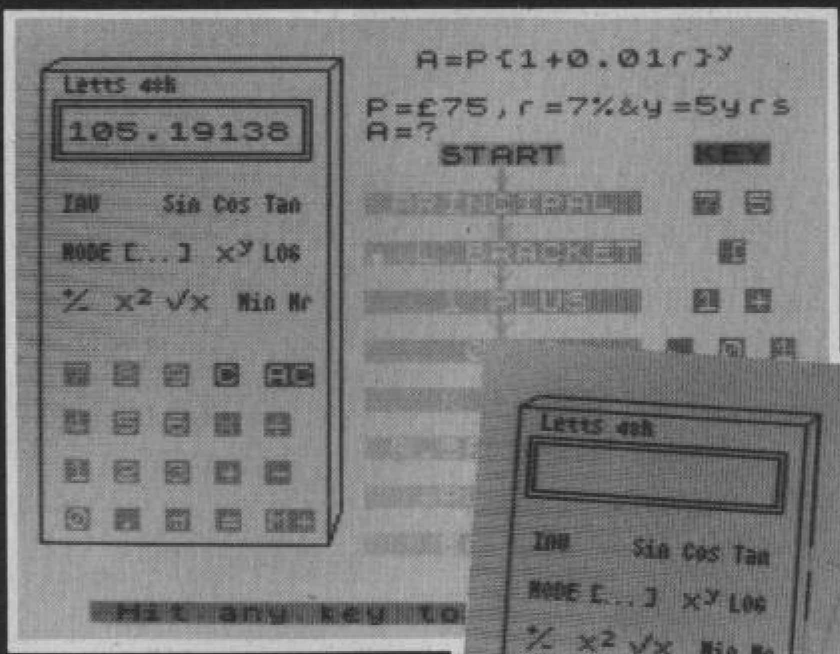


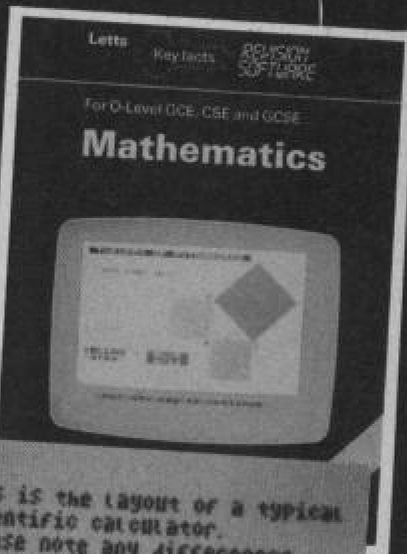
MATHEMATICS

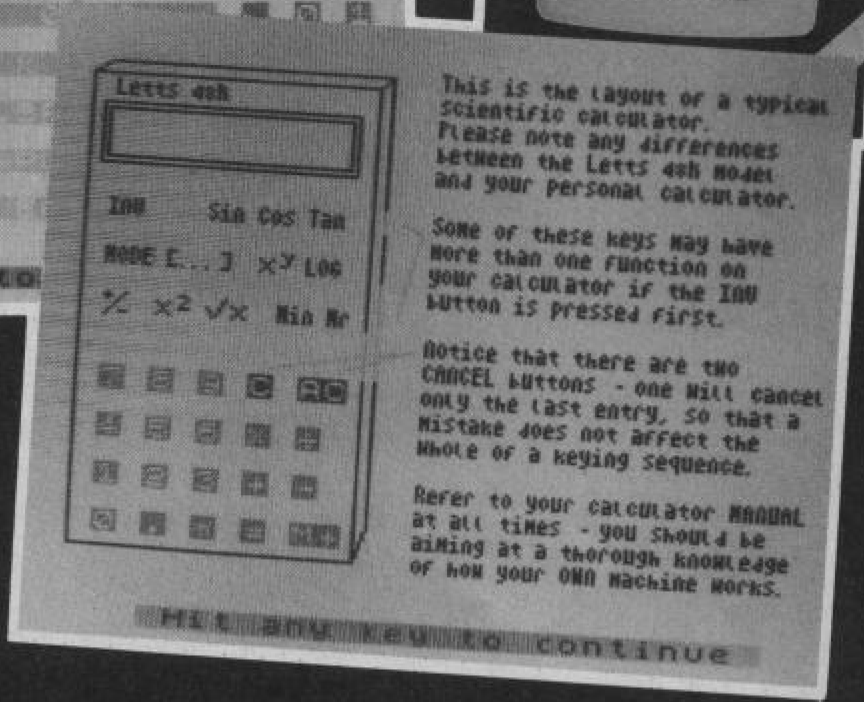
Ten different programs are provided in this package, ranging from basic arithmetic and the use of a calculator to algebra, geometry and trigonometry. This 'mathematics suite', as Letts call it, comprises a summary of important theory points, screen demonstrations, user interaction where the power of the computer is under the control of the student (eg the drawing of graphs), and several quizzes where the computer marks the answers and demonstrates correct solutions step-by-step. The suite ends with an hour-long trial examination based on the common core of the GCE syllabuses, at the end of which the student receives a breakdown of performance. The notes suggest that this exam might, in fact, be taken straight away in order to highlight specific areas of difficulty which could be worked on.

Advice is also given to the student on how to use the programs in a revision scheme, and reference is made to the other Letts revision aids, such as the Passcards. Mathematics is a subject which lends itself well to computer assisted learning, and this package would be of great help to the serious student. It does, however, cover a very wide area of mathematical knowledge, so the student may find that certain programs are far too easy. A mathematics teacher commented that the area covered was, perhaps, far too wide, although some students might benefit from revision of the basics.

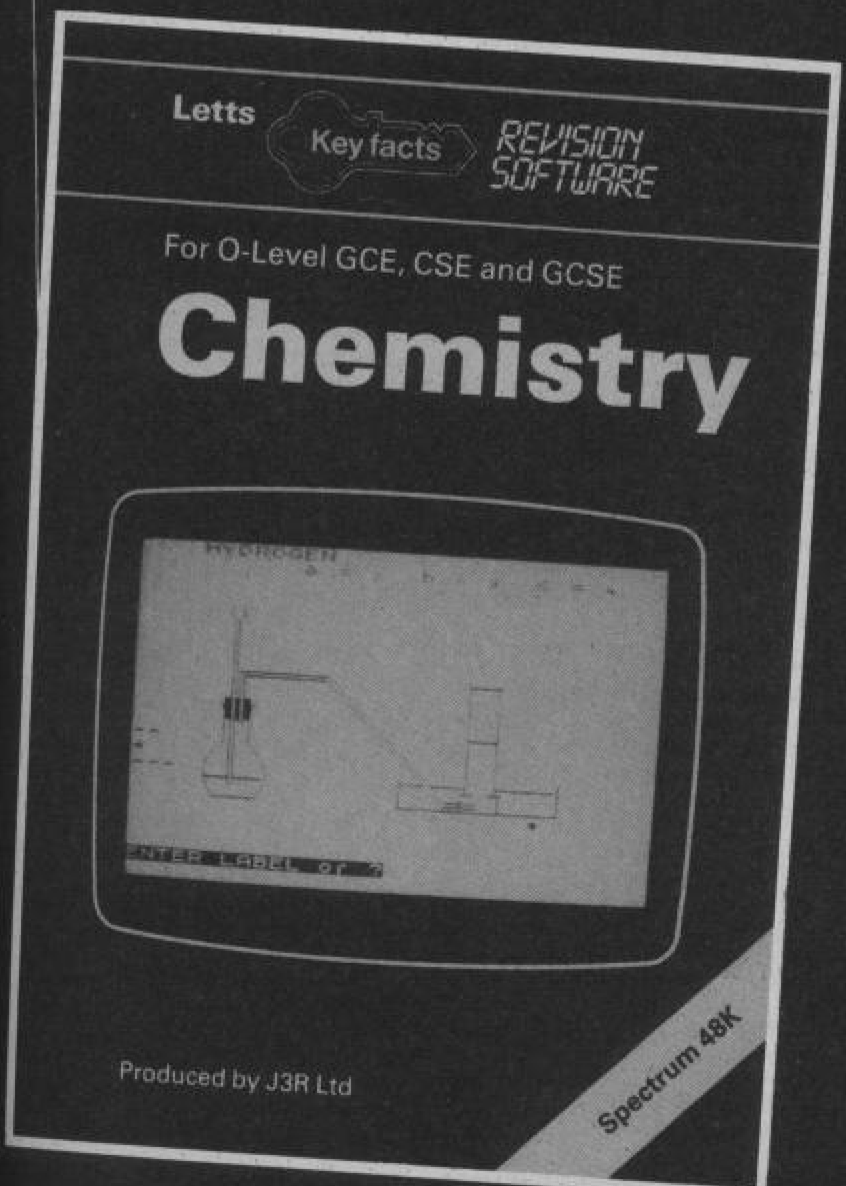
Hard sums with the calculator, part of the MATHEMATICS software from Letts







Explaining the layout of a scientific calculator in the Letts MATHEMATICS revision package

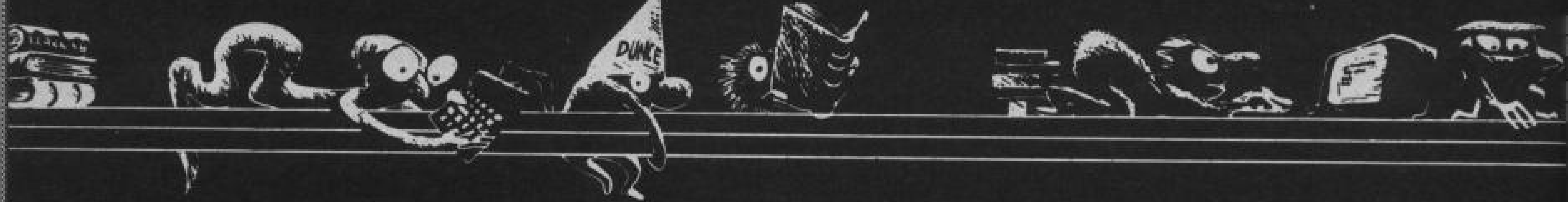


CHEMISTRY

The chemistry suite of programs is designed to test knowledge of basic facts, and to improve understanding of the underlying principles. The programs cover the following areas: atomic structure and bonding; periodic tables; formulae; chemical deductions; electrolysis; apparatus; acids; bases and salts; and organic chemistry. Several of the programs require the student to complete passages displayed on the screen as in the literature programs, and once again these are offered at 5 levels of difficulty and have a 'cheat' facility. The easier levels do little to test factual knowledge as the words omitted have nothing to do with chemistry, but I suppose the idea is to work up through all the levels so that the information becomes imprinted on the mind.

The *Periodic Table* program covers this area relatively well, but the next program *Formulae and Equations* is rather awkward to use, as the entry of correct formulae requires the use of both upper and lower case letters as well as subscript numbers which are located on the graphic keys. *Deduce* tests the user's overall knowledge of chemistry by supplying clues about a randomly selected substance, while *Elect* covers electrolysis and ionic equations. *Apparatus* is an interesting way of giving practice in the selection and assembly of the most usual apparatus for the laboratory preparation of each of 13 gases, with the student finally being required to complete balanced equations. *Acids, Bases and Salts* comes in three parts: in the first, a descriptive passage has to be completed; part two asks for comments on the proposed reactions, and the third part shows how pH levels change during the acid-base titrations. The final two programs on organic chemistry, contain four descriptive passages for completion at various levels of difficulty, and require the identification of isomers, homologues and compounds.

The chemistry specialist who looked at this suite of programs for me felt sure that it would be reasonably helpful if used with other study methods, but commented that the content at times was rather lightweight and sketchy.



PHYSICS

The 10 programs in this suite cover topics such as motion, electricity, magnetism, waves, light, heat and radioactivity. A diagnostic section in the first program provides 40 questions, and the computer then reviews the responses and suggests a method of study. The questions can also be attempted under test conditions, and at the end the score and time taken are shown, together with the number of incorrectly answered questions.

Relationships, the program which covers a variety of equations, is rather boring, but then some aspects of studying **are** boring! The two *Motion* programs use attractive graphics to convey information on speed, velocity, acceleration, force, power, momentum and so on, while *Light* deals with reflection, refraction and defects of the eye. *Radio* simulates a range of experiments on radioactivity, but the selection and manoeuverability of the elements in the detection experiment are rather slow. The Rutherford experiment shows very little, and omits one of its fundamental results — the back scattering of alpha particles. *Waves* and *Elect 2* are multiple choice programs in which the computer provides a hint if the first answer is incorrect. *Elect 1* uses a water model to help the student to understand current electricity, while *Heat* simulates heating and cooling experiments.

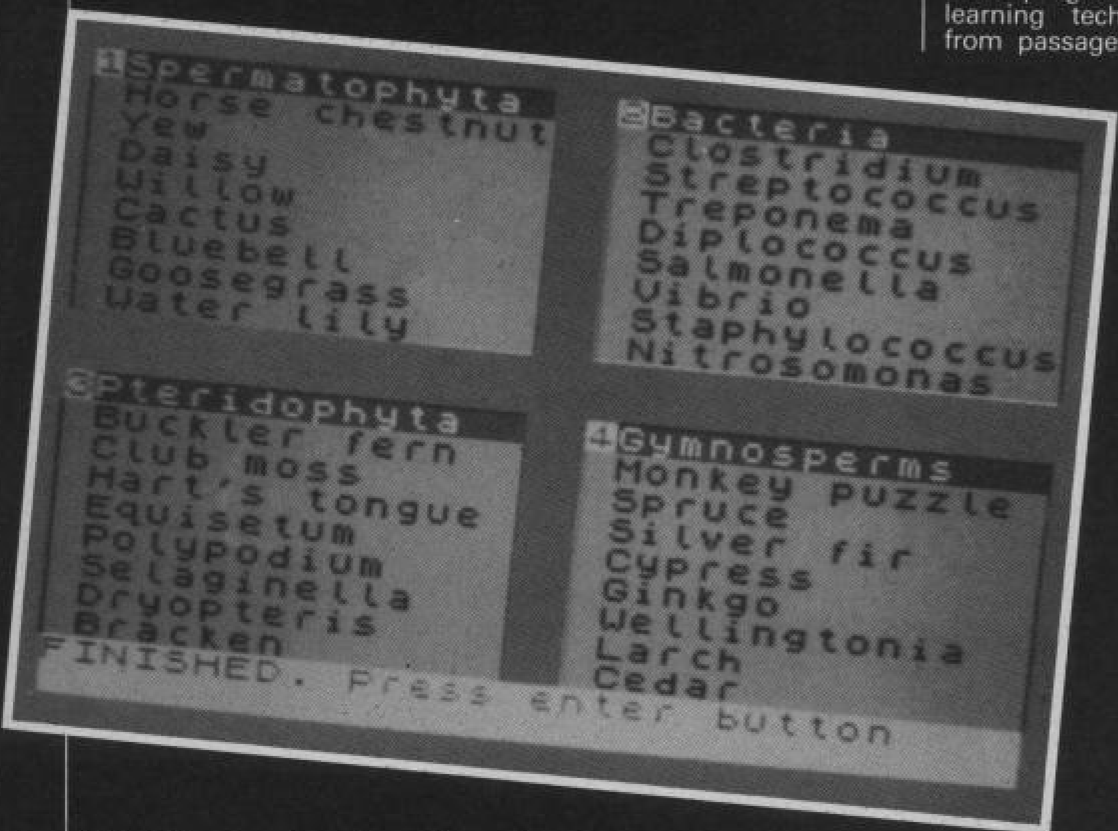
Once again, a great deal of ground is covered in this package, and good use is made of screen graphics. The student would find the test sections of particular use.

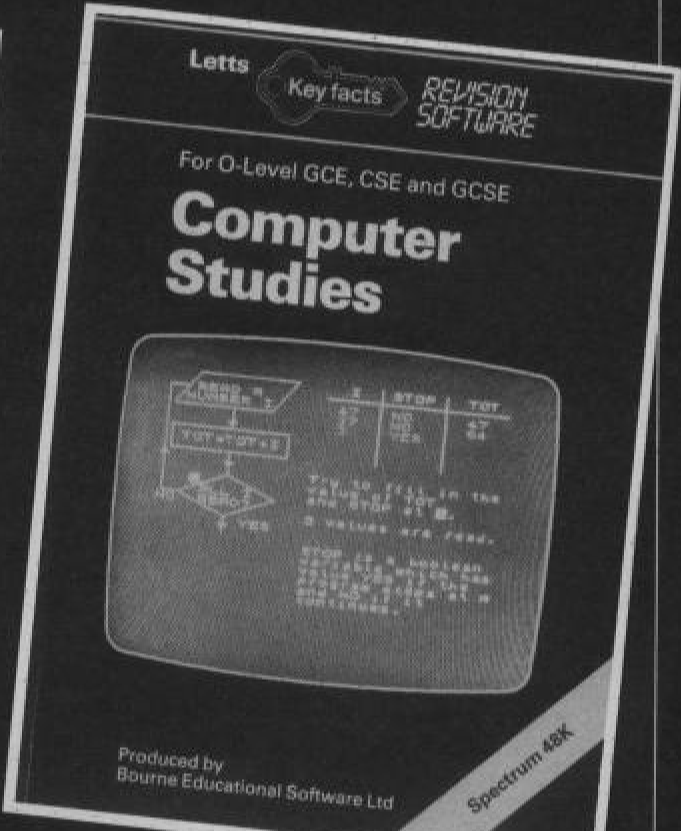
COMPUTER STUDIES

Computer Studies is, of course, one of the newest subjects in the curriculum, and it is appropriate that this subject too has prompted Letts to issue a software revision package to accompany their other aids. A very wide area of knowledge is covered in this suite, moving from the history of computers and information processing, to revision of the architecture of a typical digital computer and the CPU, and then on to information on computer hardware operating systems. Some of the programs help the student to revise software development skills, while others are aimed at deepening knowledge of techniques fundamental to the subject such as the analysis of logic circuits.

The programs use a variety of learning techniques, ranging from passages which the student has to complete to multiple choice questions. In certain programs if wrong answers are given, the computer either provides a hint or displays the correct solution after a specified number of incorrect responses. Most of the programs commence with a menu from which the student may select an area of interest. *High Level Languages* for example allows a choice from: *Expressions and Assignments*, *Branches and Loops*, and *Subroutines and Strings*, while the very complex *Number Systems* program is divided into three different areas: 1) Binary and Decimal Positive Integers; 2)Negative Integers; Addition and Subtraction; 3)Octal and Hexidecimal.

The students who looked at this suite for me were quite impressed with the range of topics covered and felt it would be a useful addition to their study aids.





Classifying bugs, beasties and organisms in the BIOLOGY revision package from Letts

BIOLOGY

The programs in this package fall into two categories. The graphics based ones are built up by interaction with the user, so that understanding of the structure and functioning of the organs or systems concerned is deepened. In *Loco* for example, a clue appears on the screen, the correct answer to which begins the drawing of the skeleton. A similar technique is used in *The Eye* where a diagrammatic cross-section of the eye is gradually built up in response to correctly answered questions on the structure and accommodation of the eye.

The second category involves the application of a large body of knowledge — in *Homeostasis* the student should know how temperature, water balance, breathing rate and blood glucose levels are controlled in a mammal. In addition to those already mentioned, the program suite covers topics such as *Variety of Life* (the plant kingdom, invertebrates, arthropods and vertebrates), *Nutrition* in plants and animals, *Food Webs* in various habitats, *Breathing*, *Blood*, *Circulation*, *Reproduction*, and *Genetics*. The graphics are clear and are used to good effect — but the content of the programs is perhaps lacking in depth for serious study purposes.

COMMENTS

CONTROL KEYS: Apart from the problems in the Chemistry suite, the control keys are clearly explained and are easy to use.
KEYBOARD PLAY: Very responsive
USE of COLOUR: Simple but clear.
GRAPHICS: Used to good effect
GENERAL RATING:

Revision programs like these are, generally speaking, only as good as the student using them. Used sensibly in conjunction with other study methods, they do have a useful role to play, but it has to be understood that, on their own, these packages will not miraculously ensure A grade passes!

THE COLLECTION

The PSS WARGAMERS SERIES has been created to combine elements of a strategy game like chess with the added excitement of a graphic arcade game. They are for the player who wants a serious but stimulating game requiring both manual dexterity and mental agility. The strategic level of the games is played on a map system, whilst the tactical can be played in an optional arcade style with you actually firing guns and missiles.

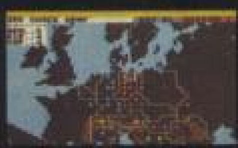
WARGAMERS SERIES



THEATRE EUROPE – STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR 1985 – CRASH/ZZAP/AMTIX.

Theatre Europe portrays the next war in Europe. Command either NATO or the WARSAW PACT forces and control air/ground/nuclear and chemical units. Optional arcade sequences put you actually in the hot seat. 3 Level game where Level 1 is for beginners (the computer opponent will not use the Nuclear option). Level 2 is a "rational" game following the accepted strategies of NATO and the WARSAW PACT. In level 3 the computer plays a highly unpredictable game where anything can happen.





"THE ATMOSPHERE GENERATED BY THIS EXCELLENT GAME IS INCREDIBLE – VIRTUALLY UNRIVALLED BY ANYTHING ELSE AVAILABLE" ZZAP 64 JUNE '85 – GOLD MEDAL AWARD.

"HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ALL OTHER WARGAMES – A POWERFUL LESSON" CCI JULY '85.

"IT MAKES YOU THINK MORE THAN MOST GAMES" – AA RAVE – AMSTRAD ACTION FEB '86.

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MIDAS







"GAME CONCEPT OF THE YEAR 1985" CRASH/ZZAP 64/AMTIX *"GAME OF THE MONTH"* – C & VG JAN '86

"CRASH SMASH" – JAN '86

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SWORDS & SORCERY – represents the first example of the Midas range. As with all role playing adventures, the aim of the game is to develop your character – you might want to become an expert swordsman, or perhaps a cunning thief – all things are possible with Swords & Sorcery. There are also quests within quests for those who want to follow them – some are given, others must be found – some are lost causes – the choice is yours!

Although possibly the most complex program yet attempted on a home micro, the controls are simplicity itself. Just six keys will control your progress around the dungeon and operate the menu system for all your other commands.

"SWORDS & SORCERY REPRESENTS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED D + D TYPE GAME YET SEEN ON A HOME MICRO" COMPUTER GAMER – GAME OF THE MONTH – DEC '85

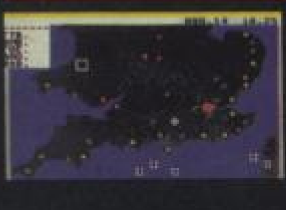
BATTLE OF BRITAIN

A 3 level game with you in control of fighter command during the summer of 1940. Optional arcade sequences include flying a Spitfire in aerial combat and firing an anti aircraft gun in ground to air fighting.



"ONE OF THE MOST PLAYABLE WARGAMES EVER" COMPUTER GAMER DEC '85
GO AND BUY IT!" – AMTIX DEC '85
"SUPERB!" – ZZAP 64 XMAS '85

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BATTLE FOR MIDWAY

You are in command of the US Pacific fleets 6 months after the attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbour. It is a 3 level game depicting 3 different Japanese strategies.



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"ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS WARGAMES EVER RELEASED" ZZAP 64 DEC '85

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Strategic WARGAMES SERIES

THE STRATEGIC WARGAMES SERIES has been designed with the wargame "purist" in mind. The games are played on a map system, are "phased" and use symbolic representation of the units. Playability is the key note in the series with 5 levels of difficulty suitable for beginner and expert alike.









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WINTER GAMES



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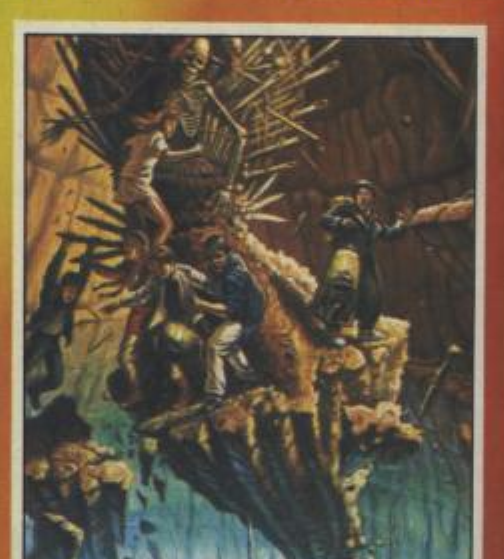
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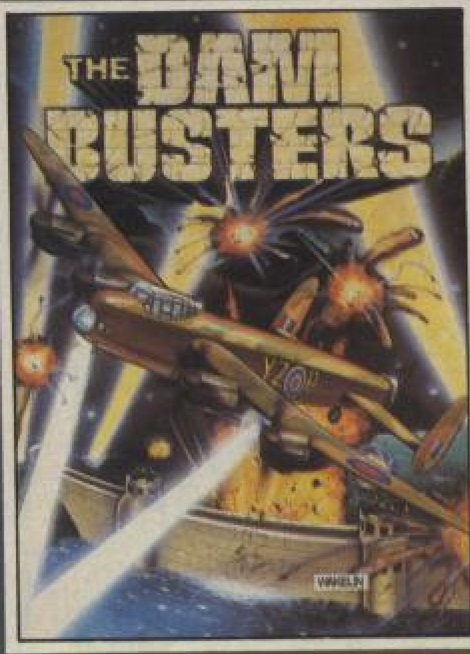
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ADI G COMPANY



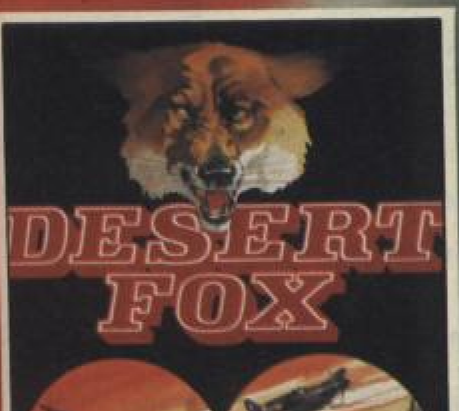
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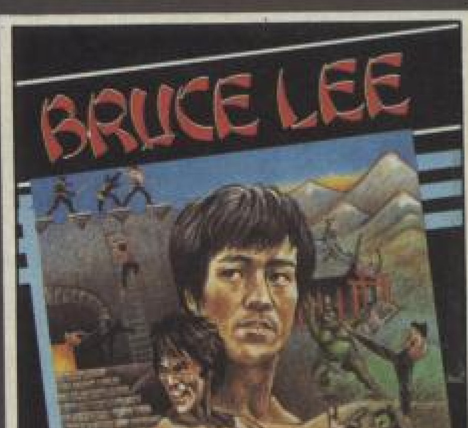
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CRASH ZX SPECTRUM

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fill that CRASH Gap.....

3 April 84	● 'Missile Command' games ● Living Guide ● Sinclair Talks ● Code Name Mat
4 May 84	● The Quill utility ● Graphics utilities ● Microdrive ● 'Pengo' games ● Living Guide
5 June 84	● New Generation ● Jet Set Willy Map ● 'Panic' games ● Alphacom printer
10 November 84	● Battlefield Joystick — comparisons ● Deus Ex Machina
16 May 85	● Sports simulations roundup ● Sinclair Story 2 ● Firebird ● Incentive ● Light Magic graphics utility ● music utilities ● Underwurlde Map 1 ● Bruce lee map ● Sabre Wulf Map ● Everyone's A Wally Map ● Artist: Godfrey Dowson
17 June 85	● Denton Designs ● Frankie ● Spectrum surgery ● Sinclair Story 3 ● Knight Lore Map 1 ● Underwurlde Map 2 ● Tape to Microdrive ● Leonardo graphics utility ● Datel sound sampler ● Artist: David Thorpe
18 July 1985	●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in Issue 8●Gyron map of Atrium●Modems round-up ●And the cover that had the Jehova's Jumping!
19 August 1985	***WITHOUT PAGES 123, 124, 125 and 126. WITH:*** ●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC Compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire
20 September 1985	●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview
Issue 21 October 1985	●Previews of Marsport, Astroclone, Elite and Scooby Doo ●NODES OF YESOD map ●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram ●Crashtionnaire analysis ●Platinum Productions profile
22 November 1985	●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in the NICHE and part 2 of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is On The Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks●Early looks at Robot Messiah, Tau Ceti and Zoids
23 December 1985	●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends● Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th●More previews, comps and tips
Christmas Special 1985/6	On The Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants under Roger Kean's Eagle Eye●Short story●Plus a host of Festive Fun and Frolics
25 February 1986	●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and examines extensions to ZX BASIC

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- Undo
- Clear screen
- New (clears screen, restores current pattern to black and reselects joystick or keyboard)
- Print to ZX printer
- Magnify screen area
- Edit drawing and filling pattern
- Colour mode
- Load and save to microdrive or cassette



Following the current trend towards icon driven graphics utilities, Audiogenic have released ICON GRAPHIX from ASL. This is being marketed as a powerful icon driven graphics and design tool and competes with comparable offerings such as ART STUDIO from Rainbird Software and THE ARTIST from The Edge.

The program cassette contains the basic software as well as a Microdrive compatible copy which can be installed on a Microdrive cartridge automatically once it has been loaded.

The screen of ICON GRAPHIX displays the drawing window surrounded by the option boxes. Pictures may be created in the drawing window using the tool icons grouped around it. Selecting (or changing) drawing tools is achieved simply by positioning the current tool over the box to be selected and by pressing CAPS SHIFT or fire on the joystick. There range of drawing tools to choose from includes felt pens of various shapes and sizes, sprays and brushes. All drawing is done in the current pattern and there are 34 patterns to choose from. If that's not enough, existing patterns may be edited to create your own patterns.

A magnify facility with a simple pixel set or reset facility can be used for detail work. Corrections can be made with the

TOOLS and COMMANDS

FELT PEN

Drawing is done with the current pattern. Several shapes and sizes of pen can be selected by accessing the Shapes box.

SPRAY

The spray does not plot a random pattern of dots on the screen, but draws a fuzzy blob of the current pattern.

BRUSH

The brush provides the normal fill operation. Mistakes may be corrected with the UNDO command

BOX

The pencil is used to point to the first diagonal and by pressing the CAPS SHIFT continuously the rectangle is dragged across the screen until the desired size is obtained.

CIRCLE

The circle or ellipse is shaped by fixing one corner, dragging and then releasing. The ellipse is proportioned to fit inside an imaginary box between the first fixed corner and the current arrow position. A circle is obtained with an imaginary square box.

LINE

Line draws a straight line from a fixed point and can be used to draw approximated curves by successively releasing the CAPS SHIFT key to reposition the fixed point and join lines.

RUBBER

Rubber erases the current area covered by the square rubber icon. Finer erasures should be accomplished with a fine pen and a white pattern or with the magnify facility.

PUSH PAGE

Push Page moves the drawing window around to uncover areas of the screen covered by the option boxes including the two lines at the bottom of the screen.

UNDO

Undo undoes the last screen function and restores the condition previous to the last execution.

CLS

Cls clears the screen.

NEW

New clears the screen, restores the current pattern to black and reselects the joystick or keyboard. As this function cannot be undone, the program requires a confirmation before proceeding.

PRINT

Print dumps the 24 screen lines to the ZX or Alphacom printer.

SHAPES

Shapes displays a tray of 16 different pen shapes with the current pen shape marked with a ring. A new shape is selected by pointing and pressing CAPS SHIFT.

MAGNIFY

Magnify enlarges a portion of the screen pointed to by the arrow cursor. This is useful for detail work, where individual pixels may be set or reset or the whole magnified part erased with the rubber tool box.

EDIT PATTERN

Any unwanted pattern may be selected and the current pattern box 'pressed'. The pattern design appears in magnified form in the screen centre with a lifesized sample above it. Pixels can be set or reset and when the pattern is satisfactory, the OK box can be clicked.

COLOUR

To add colour to the picture, the COLOUR box is selected. A palette of colours appears at the top of the screen with 8 ink squares, 8 paper colours and Bright and Flash strips beneath the ink and paper squares. The tools available in colour mode are the PEN, which is used to fill in attribute squares with the current colours, and PUSH PAGE, which pushes the colour squares around to match up previous design pushes. CLS restores the colours to black and white, UNDO restores the colours after a CLS or undoes the last colouring and NEW returns to ordinary drawing mode, saving the colour attributes to memory so that the saved picture can be loaded back later as a normal coloured screen.

LOAD and SAVE

Load and save may be performed on Pictures and Documents. Picture is equivalent to a SCREEN including the colour attributes and a Document is a picture including any new patterns.

Rubber tool or with the powerful Undo routine, which cancels the effect of the last function selected. Push Page provides access to hidden parts of the screen. Special drawing functions provided are Elastic Line, Box, Circle and Ellipse.

Usually, the picture is drawn in black and white first. Then the colour mode is entered, which displays the palette of colour options including Bright and Flashing and colour can be added to the picture. Once Ink and Paper colours have been selected, the Pen tool is used to fill in the attribute characters over the existing pattern.

A screen dump routine allows screen pictures to be immortalised by printing the 24 screen lines to a ZX or Alphacom printer; pictures and documents may be saved to tape or Microdrive cartridge for later use. Pictures are equivalent to Screen saves, while documents also include any new patterns generated.

ICON GRAPHIX performs very well and is very userfriendly. The various drawing options and tools are located at the bottom edge of the screen, with the large selection of pattern boxes spread around the edge of the drawing window. The current pattern is always displayed in the bottom right corner and to change the current pattern this box must be accessed and CAPS SHIFT pressed. In colour mode the top line of pattern boxes is replaced with the colour palette.

Several important functions and facilites found in most graphics packages nowadays are missing from ICON GRAPHIX. Cut, Paste, Copy and Move facilities, which would allow screen details to be duplicated or moved to other areas of the screen are noticeably absent. There are no special drawing modes for blending new designs into existing screen drawings using the logical AND and XOR functions. Serious screen designers will miss a screen dump routine for 80 column dot matrix printers, as the minimalist 32 column thermal print-outs are unlikely to satisfy them. Despite these omissions ICON GRAPHIX is a handy screen creating tool which could prove to be a lot of fun to use.

Program: Icon Graphix
Producer: Audiogenic Software Ltd.
Price: £9.95

TECH TIPS

FILTERED TIPS

Simon Goodwin

This month's TECH TIPS column covers quite a few subjects, as several of the ideas discussed in previous months pop up again. I've found the missing paragraphs from last month's BASIC review, for instance (sorry!) and assessed a 'spin off' from Laser BASIC — The Laser Compiler. There's more news about Lenslok and the Microdrive Doctor, both of which we featured in past issues. We've also got some advice on logic gates and video circuitry.

OOPS DEPARTMENT

Last month's review of an add-on BASIC system was missing a few paragraphs from the bottom of the first column on page 102. This meant that some of the details of Sportscene's Mega BASIC went missing; we'd like to apologise to any readers who were confused or misled, and to Sportscene themselves — although, to be fair to our Production Minion, the review was only late because our original *Mega BASIC* tape was incomplete.

Anyhow, the wandering wisdom is reproduced below — let's hope that the delay caused by adding it to this month's column doesn't provoke any other disasters!

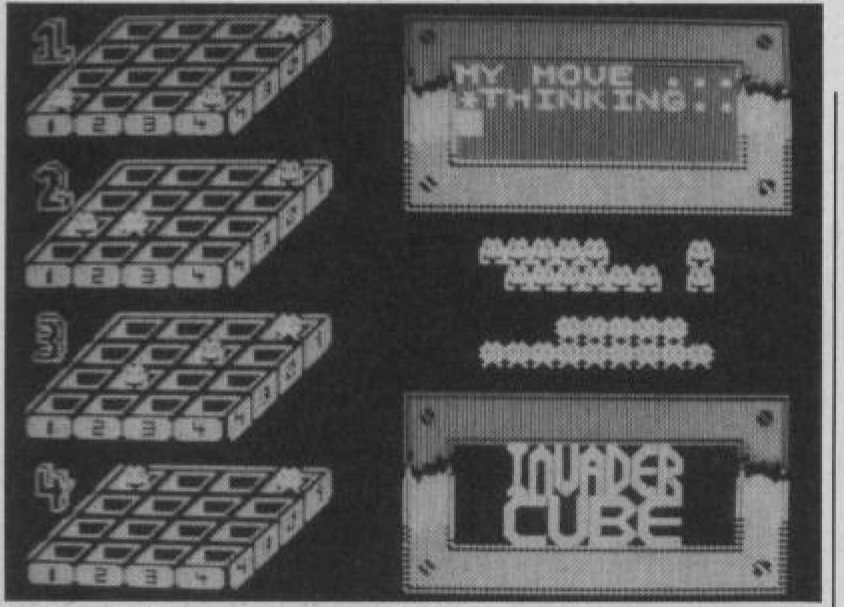
beyond it.
Beta BASIC graphics commands include a **FILL** function which colours bounded areas of the screen for you. Filling is fairly fast and you even get a count of the number of points filled. Graphics can be shifted and scaled within a window and you can use absolute co-ordi makes it rather sluggish but decent results can be obtained

which prints ... files. There's also a rather dan gerous cassette file copier th destroys your current progra and crashes the machine if th file concerned is more than 20 long!
Mega BASIC is genera frustrating to use if you make mistake. The commands do check their parameters prope

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Beta BASIC graphics commands include a FILL function which colours bounded areas of the screen for you. Filling is fairly fast, and you even get a count of the number of points filled. Graphics can be shifted and scaled within a window, and you can use absolute co-ordinates rather than offsets, when draw-



ing lines on the screen.

What *Mega BASIC* excels at is multi-tasking. The Spectrum's interrupt facility is used all over the place. You can produce intricate non-stop sound effects while a program runs, or make two programs run at once — or all three at the same time! The software multi-tasks rather crudely, executing lines from two parts of a program alternately.

Mega BASIC has simple, four-character-size animated sprite graphics. The eight sprites can move, changing shape automatically, while the program controlling them does something else. It amazes me that *Laser BASIC* did not include this feature — in fact it DOES appear in the Amstrad and Commodore versions of *Laser BASIC*.

The *Mega BASIC* Sprite Designer was a bit of a disappointment since it wasn't recorded on my cassette. We got a replacement at the next Microfair, and found it to be a competent but unimaginatively-written program — not as good as the character designer on the *Horizons* cassette, for instance. It is written in *Mega BASIC*, which makes it rather sluggish, but decent results can be obtained with a bit of effort.

COMPILER?

Last month I looked at Ocean's *Laser BASIC* — a set of graphics extensions to ZX BASIC — and mentioned the fact that a 'compiler' for the extended language was promised. The *Laser BASIC Compiler* has turned up, and it's very, well, interesting.

For your £9.95 you get a crush-proof plastic box, an eight page A5 manual, and one cassette. One side of the tape contains the compiler, 'run time routines' and a loading program. On the other side there is a compiled copy of the *Laser BASIC* demonstration package. Curiously, many of the effects do not seem to to have been accelerated by the compiler, and some of the others are now noticeably more flickery.

The press release we received with the program says that the *Laser Compiler* will turn *Laser BASIC* into 'fast machine code'. The packaging is less forthright, promising only that 'compiled programs run typically twice as fast as their interpreted equivalents'. In the manual this is toned down still further to 'probably only a factor of two or less'. You are allowed to sell compiled programs to anyone, and purchasers do not need the *Laser BASIC* interpreter.

LASER DRILL

The LASER Compiler is not easy to use. For a start, you are not allowed to load it while the main *Laser BASIC* system is in memory, so you have to save your program, reset the Spectrum, and re-load the BASIC before you can load the compiler. You also have to clear 6K of memory before you load the compiler, or it won't work. The program really should do this for you.

Once the compiler is loaded you set it off with a RANDOMIZE USR command. The system overwrites your original BASIC as it works, and it 'gives up' as soon as an illegal command is found, spitting out an error message. You have to re-load your BASIC, correct the problem and try again for every single error, one by one. This is irritating even if you've got Microdrives — with cassettes it is mind-numbing, especially as not all of the error messages are listed in the manual.

Luckily, the *Laser* system doesn't impose many restrictions. You're not allowed to use calculated line-numbers in GOTOs, GOSUBs and RESTOREs, CLEAR is prohibited and array dimensioning works in a slightly different way — arrays are pre-built to a fixed size if possible. Microdrive data files are banned, but other Microdrive commands are allowed. There's no program text after a compilation so LIST, MERGE etc, obviously don't work.

The compilation process is very, very fast. Benchmarks compile in the blink of an eye and a 300 statement program was processed in under three seconds. I didn't find any bugs in the resultant code, but — as we shall see — that is hardly surprising.

The code can be saved and loaded in the normal way, but the listing has disappeared, to be replaced by a dummy PRINT, a RANDOMIZE USR call, and a couple of lines containing all the DATA and DEF FN statements from the original program. The 'compiled code' is stored invisibly thereafter.

The tape-twiddling is not over once the program has been compiled. Believe it or not, you can't use the compiled code when the compiler is loaded! You must first load the 'run time' routines that process *Laser BASIC* commands. These routines have to be loaded in place of the compiler.

TIME TRIALS

This elaborate procedure meant that I was not able to perform all the usual benchmarks, but I did try a simple IF test. A loop that took 39 seconds in ZX BASIC ran in 28 seconds when compiled. This was a very disappointing result — much slower than any other Spectrum BASIC compiler.

I decided to try the *Laser Compiler* on a 'real' program — a game listing from a now-defunct magazine. The program was written in straight-forward BASIC, where it took, on average, 39 seconds to generate a maze. In 'fast machine code' — Ocean's term, not mine — it took 35 seconds. In other words, the *Laser Compiler* made no useful difference to the speed of the program.

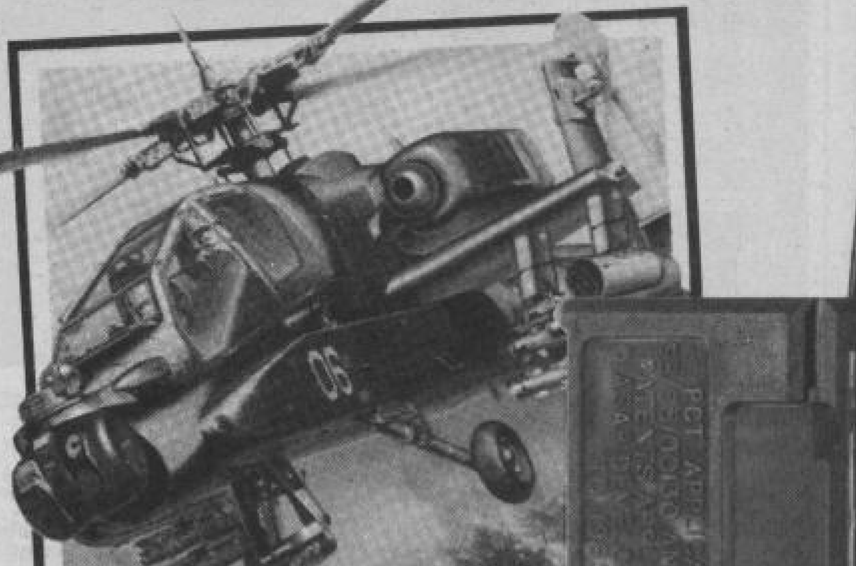
I tried a few other tests and they confirmed my impression. This 'compiler' was just making a few minor changes to the format of the program and 'hiding' the listing to make it look as if it had been compiled. I analysed a 'compiled' program file and discovered that it contained all the normal program text, keywords, variables and all — you could read the listing straight off the screen, and there was no sign of any machine code.

The re-ordering of data and definitions makes little difference to the speed of the code. The only other changes seemed to affect line-numbers and IF statements, where (I assume) addresses rather than numbers were used. This is not, in itself, a clever trick, since a program to do the job was listed in Your Computer magazine over a year or so ago. *Beta BASIC* does something similar when processing loops.

I can't recommend the *Laser BASIC 'Compiler'* to anyone. It is expensive, hard to use and — in the final analysis — almost useless since it makes little difference to the speed of most BASIC programs. It is most short-sighted of Ocean to launch this program on their new 'IQ' label. It is not a compiler at all, in the usual computer-programming sense, because it uses the same tokens as slothful ZX BASIC. There's no sign of the 'fast machine code' generation promised in Ocean's press release.

The Laser 'compiler' may be useful to those who want to market programs written using the *Laser BASIC* interpreter, but I can't believe that there will be many of them, and the package does seem to introduce extra graphics flicker. The run-time system should have been part of the Laser BASIC package to start with.

LENSLOK



A couple of months ago I explained the details of the *Lenslok* security system in CRASH. That explanation obviously came too late for Firebird, who seem to have made a mess of their implementation on Spectrum *Elite*.

In principle, *Lenslok* is a good system — it is easy to use, cheap, and it works, as long as the display is at least ten centimetres wide and the user looks directly through a properly folded lens.

The software industry desperately needs a way to stop home copying. If *Lenslok* — or a similar system — fails, then all honest software buyers will suffer as a result. Unfortunately, Firebird seem to have made several mistakes, and *Lenslok*

TECH TIPS POSTBAG

We have heard from two people who are having trouble with the joystick project in December's CRASH. It turns out that a few Spectrum logic chips are running very close to specification, and can't cope with the extra load of a joystick. The result is that certain keys or joystick selections fail to work when the stick is plugged in. The problem tends to affect a whole row or column of keys. I'm sorry that I didn't warn you of this possibility, but it is very rare and most Spectrums work perfectly well with the interface.

You can cure the fault by replacing the logic chip or ULA in your machine, but you should carefully work through the test procedure listed in the magazine first. Replacement ULAs cost about £10 from firms that do Spectrum repairs — they just plug into a socket on the Spectrum circuit board. The ULA is the big chip in a socket, with *Ferranti* written on the top. There are two sorts — the first was used in issue 1 and 2 Spectrums, and a revised component was used in later machines. The first chip worked more by luck than by design, and it got very hot — the later one was more reliable.

You can tell which version you need by looking at the circuit board. Follow the usual instructions to take the computer apart. Early Spectrums have four adjustable components, with screwdriver slots, at the left hand side of the ULA (with the edge connector pointing away from you). These components are missing from computers with the revised ULA — machines from late 1983 onwards.



isn't universally loved, if the contents of Lloyd's postbag are anything to go by!

The first mistake was to install *Lenslok* wrongly on some copies of Spectrum *Elite*. It is quite impossible to use one production copy that was sent to CRASH, unless you deliberately ignore part of the instructions.

Before attempting to use the lens to unscramble the pattern of dots displayed on your screen, you have to let the *Lenslok* system know the size of your telly screen. Rather than type in the appropriate measurement, in inches, cubits, nautical miles or whatever, you adjust two lines on the screen until they are a known width apart — the width of the lens holder, which just happens to be 100 mm. The computer keeps a count of the number of pixels between one line and the other, so it can convert from pixels to millimetres (on your telly) with ease.

WRONG SUMS

Unfortunately, Firebird got their sums wrong. A mistake in their code means that you have to set the lines substantially wider than the instructions would have you believe. It is not too difficult to do this, if you use the scrambled display of the letters 'OK' to work out the correct setting, but you fail completely if you do just what you're told.

Firebird have owned up to a different problem, which makes the system completely unusable in some cases. *Lenslok* uses the lens as a key and the software as a lock. Codes in the program produce graphics which can only be read through a particular lens. Firebird have shipped the wrong lens — the wrong key — with some copies of *Elite*.

There are millions of possible lenses, just as there are millions of possible keys for most locks (except the one on the Editor's van, which could be opened with anything sharper than a milk-bottle). If you use the wrong lens, the 'lok' stays shut.

You can check your copy of *Elite* by prising the small transparent lens from its orange plastic holder. Unless you are needlessly violent, you'll find two small tags projecting from the side of the lens. If there's a letter 'A' on the lens, all is well; but if there's a letter 'B' you've got the wrong lens, and no amount of peering at the screen will decipher the scrambled display.

Firebird will replace a type 'B' lens if you send it back to them. They'll also send you a free game as compensation for the time you've wasted.

I hope that *Lenslok* survives these problems, because it has a lot of promise. It would be a great shame if people were put off the idea because of teething problems. Whatever happens, we'll keep you posted.

MICRO-DRIVING

In the last few weeks we've been deluged with post from LW Tomlin, who seems to have been updating his *Microdrive Doctor* program on an almost daily basis. He doesn't put dates on his letters, which causes some confusion, but we think that the current price is £6.50 for version 2.1 of the program, on cartridge (of course!). Further upgrades cost £1 on return of the original cartridge and a SAE. The program is now published by **Pipeq systems, of 151 Millbridge, Dollis Valley Way, Barnet, Herts EN5 2HU**.

The new version comes with a much-improved manual, with tips and examples. Numbers are entered in decimal — hurrah!

New commands are: *INVERSE which re-names files; *POINT which selects a new 'default' drive; *READ to list the sector numbers of a given file; and *LOAD, *SAVE, *FORMAT, *NEW and *MERGE — useful variations upon the standard commands. Version 2.1 also includes a 'sector editor' which lets you check or change the information on a cartridge, character by character.

If you use Microdrives, this program is an excellent buy. If you used to use Microdrives, and gave up sometime after they did, *Microdrive Doctor* might restore your faith, and perhaps your data too. Highly recommended.

TWIDDLY BITS

These components are interesting in their own right, as they let people with early computers adjust the display to suit their TV. The top component, marked VC1, sets the 'clock' which the ULA uses to synchronise the display. You can get rid of most of the 'dot crawl' on the screen by letting the computer warm up and then turning the metal screw in the middle of the component. Use an insulating device, such as a plastic spoon, to turn the screw — a metal tool will disturb the circuit, and it could fall into the works with potentially expensive consequences.

The second component, imaginatively named VC2, keeps the colour chip ticking over — there's nothing to be gained by adjusting this, as far as I know.

The bottom two twiddly things are variable resistors. They set the colours — one adjusts the blue signal and the other the red. The best way to set them is to print a line of paper in each colour and fiddle around until you can see an even range of shades of grey on a monochrome display.

NEX' MUNF

In April we'll get our soldering irons out once again and tackle a couple more simple hardware projects. If you think the Spectrum should have come with a reset button, or a Composite Video socket, TECH TIPS will prove you right. I'll also have a sift through our mailbag. If you've a problem or suggestion, please write to:

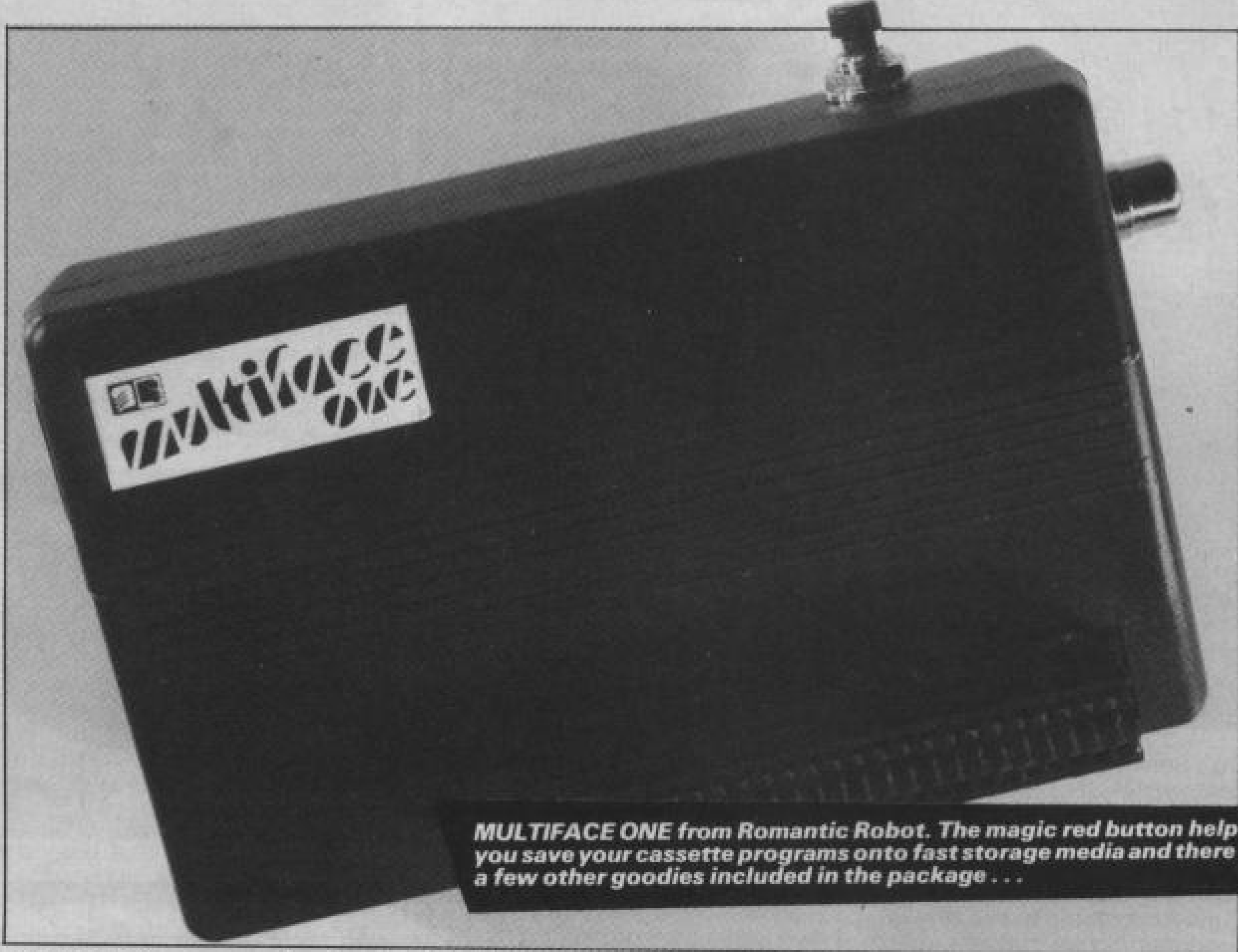
TECH TIPS, PO BOX 10,
LUDLOW, SY8 1DB

MULTIFACETTED DEVICE □

Romantic Robot's MULTIFACE ONE follows in the footsteps of earlier FAST-SAVE interfaces such as INTERFACE III and MIRAGE, but incorporates extra facilities. It provides an automatic SAVE facility for cassette, Microdrive, Wafadrive and various disk drive based Spectrum systems, features a Kempston type joystick interface and has a composite video output connection.

These three ingredients improve the performance of the Spectrum by providing a more versatile storage interface, a port for the obligatory joystick and a crisper screen picture. MULTIFACE ONE supports the OPUS DISCOVERY and BETA disk interfaces directly and other drives can be accommodated by saving programs to tape in a manageable format. These can then be loaded without MULTIFACE ONE into the computer and copied to disk.

The unit plugs in as usual onto the edge connector; the joystick is connected to the 9 way joystick plug on the lefthand side and the video cable to the phono plug on the righthand side of the interface. With a Microdrive system the MULTIFACE ONE should be plugged in at the back of the INTERFACE 1 unit, but all other storage devices, WAFADRIVE, OPUS and BETA, must be connected to the extension port of MULTIFACE ONE. All software functions are initialised by pressing the ubiquitous red pushbutton.



MULTIFACE ONE from Romantic Robot. The magic red button helps you save your cassette programs onto fast storage media and there are a few other goodies included in the package . . .

The joystick interface is Kempston compatible, which means it is port mapped to address 31. The joystick function can be checked by pressing the red button and then SYMBOL SHIFT and A which should cause the data values to appear at the bottom right of the screen when the joystick is waggled. For the BETA disk interface the Kempston joystick interface must be disabled as it interferes with the disk drive operation. This is done by opening the rear cover and cutting a wire link close to the joystick connector.

The video output is not generated by MULTIFACE ONE, but is taken directly from the Spectrum's edge connector. This means some Spectrum owners may not find any signal on the output of their unit as it seems some machines do not have the video signal available at the edge connector. Some Spectrum owners may find the signal very weak and noisy and see no improvement in picture quality. The familiar dot crawl will persist, as the video signal is generated from intermodulation of the colour carrier frequencies required for the standard PAL video signal. The quality of even a perfect PAL composite signal will never match that obtained with the separate RGB signals, but composite video provides an improvement in picture sharpness at least.

The save facility is obtained by pressing the red button. This can be done at any time, regardless of the program running. MULTIFACE ONE freezes the current program and displays a list of options on the bottom two lines of the screen. EXIT provides an exit from MULTIFACE ONE and the program. This allows you to study, alter or customise the program but only on the condition that the computer doesn't crash on exit, which depends on the existence of standard system variables. RETURN gives the control back to the current program. SAVE initiates the save routine for screens or programs. POKE provides a facility to POKE and PEEK any part of the Spectrum's memory.

Selecting SAVE generates a prompt for the file name, which can be 9 characters long. If only ENTER is pressed the program automatically enters RUN. With the BETA drive the name is 7 characters long and ENTER on its own will provide the name BOOT.

Once the filename has been selected a menu appears: SCREEN saves a screen on its own; PROGRAM saves both screen and program and is the default setting. Then you need to specify the device you want to save to which can be TAPE, CARTRIDGE, WAFER or DISC. MULTIFACE ONE automatically detects if OPUS DISCOVERY or BETA is connected and follows the correct procedure. The program or screen is then saved to the selected storage device.

Programs are always saved in four parts: a BASIC loader, the main code, the screen and the operating code. MULTIFACE saves the contents of the computer (the RAM IMAGE) in a compressed form. There is an abort facility at every stage of the process — BREAK brings you back to the current menu. In most cases MULTIFACE ONE need not be present to reload the programs it has been used to save. The only disadvantage is the distortion of the top third of the screen, which usually gets updated by the program anyway.

Typically, a 16K program occupies 53 sectors (about 13K) and loads within 10 seconds on a BETA drive. This compares favourably with the MAGIC BUTTON facility of the BETA itself, which saves the whole 48K, without compression, onto 192 sectors. If you want to save space you have to name the file and copy it to another disk so that several programs can be stacked. MAGIC BUTTON only operates with empty single sided formatted disks. MULTIFACE ONE can store up to 24 16K programs onto a doublesided 40 track disk without renaming and recopying files.

MULTIFACE ONE has 8K ROM for its own software and 8K RAM as buffer area. The RAM can be used to store data and machine code routines, utilities, tools and so on, if required. The RAM sits below the screen area and must be paged for access. This can only be done in machine code.

MULTIFACE ONE performs well with all the storage devices listed. The compression technique assures economic saving and fast loading of any program. The system is well protected against erroneous usage with different error reports for the different systems. An extra facility, JUMP, should be implemented quite soon and will allow users to JUMP to a specific location in memory and execute code beginning at that address. Useful if you have a Disassembler lurking in memory, perhaps . . . Extensions to the PEEK and POKE functions are also planned — at present the facility only works in decimal notation, but the upgraded unit will offer a Hex display option and be capable of revealing the contents of the Z80 registers. Direct compatibility with the Kempston KDOS system is also planned for the future. In all, a worthwhile buy, especially for owners of fast storage devices.

Franco Frey

Multiface One
Producer: Romantic Robot
Price: £39.95

MANAGING WORDS

Oxford Computer Publishing's Spectrum Wordprocessor is put through its paces by Ace reviewerperson, Dominic Handy

Tasword II has been out for nearly two years now. During that long space of time it has pushed aside a number of attacks from other word processing programs with the greatest of ease. But fears are growing for its safety as market leader, as Oxford Computer Publishing (creators of *Art Studio*) bring out a new offering called *Word Manager*. As soon as *Word Manager* arrived, it was out with my printer and disc drive to see if this challenger was really going to topple *Tasword II* off its (by now warm) perch.

As a dedicated *Tasword II* user — I've had a copy since it was first released — I was pleased to see that OCP understand that *Tasword II* has got a firm hold on the Spectrum Word Processing world and there are lots of Tasword files sitting on cassette already. Thoughtfully, OCP have included a facility in *Word Manager* which allows you to LOAD *Tasword* files into their word processor with the greatest of ease. Only the slightest amount of editing is needed — a few words which may have got joined together in justifying need to be separated.

OCP have also given great thought to the compatability of its product with the peripherals it controls. When loading for the first time you are presented with an option of setting up *Word Manager* with the built in machine code routines (17 to be precise) for your printer. If your printer interface is not included in the menu then don't despair if you can't implement your own machine code routine, get in touch with OCP for assistance.

Fast access backing store peripherals are also taken into consideration with a host of different versions of the software available to complement your hardware — and if you've got a Microdrive or OPUS disc drive then you don't have to pay any extra (but the OPUS drive does provide BASIC microdrive compatability).

When compared with *Tasword II* knock for knock, *Word Manager* has a large number of extra features and extensions which, to my mind, give it the edge over the current market leader. It is a more flexible and more powerful wordprocessor in the final analysis:

THE FEATURES

Insert Mode: Insertion of characters without overwriting. Insert mode can be switched on or off.

Fast Edit: The cursor can be moved around word by word and page by page.

Deletion: Allows a letter, word, line, block or paragraph to be deleted all commencing at the cursor position. You are also allowed to change from deleting to the left of the cursor to deleting letters to the right of the cursor.

Moving Blocks: Text blocks of any size can be marked and moved or copied to the present cursor position very rapidly.

Moving Cursor: The cursor can be moved to the start/end of text, and last cursor position when re-entering the text file from menu. It can also jump to the start of the present line and the start/end of the present paragraph.

Hatch Codes: Can produce new paragraph marker or tell the program not to justify this line. A hatch code can also be placed to tell the printer to start a new page, ie add one to page number displayed and produce a blank line to separate it.

Address Codes: These are placed when using OCP's *Address Manager* with *Word Manager*, and mark names, addresses and telephone numbers.

Script Search: Searches the script for a specific word/letter. You can also delete all occurrences of a word/letter in the script from the beginning or from the cursor position. The word/letter selected can also be changed for another if you wish.

Tabulation: The TAB function allows the user to vary the column that the cursor returns to when entering a line, this is useful when preparing tables. A **Do Not Justify** hatch code has to be positioned at the beginning of each line otherwise 'your table will be completely screwed up' as the manual puts it.



Justifying: Justification (spreading the line out along the screen to produce an even edge to the text file) only occurs when a paragraph is completed. You can opt to justify a complete document, and can to put hyphens in the words split over two lines. Left or right hand margin justification can be selected.

Miscellaneous: Text can be centred on a line; words can be swapped round — eg I am becomes am I; blank lines can be inserted.

GETTING HARD COPY

The printer applications are very impressive and allow the user to change the width of the printed line from 1 to 128 characters. Line width should be adjusted before you start, as it tends to muck up the justification if done halfway through writing a script. The screen line simulates the printer, stretching the 80 columns of the printer over two screen lines, which I found very hard to get used to — but it seems to work alright.

The Printer menu allows you to have single or double spacing between printed lines. It also allows you to use continuous paper or single A4 sheets to print on. The script can be printed in its entirety or from the cursor position, and output stops when a block marker is encountered. Page numbers can be printed in the centre at the top or bottom, or at the top right hand corner — or they can be left out altogether. Page numbering can commence at any number.

Printer Codes

Unlike *Tasword II*, *Word Manager* uses ASCII symbols for printer codes and not the easy to use preset 'graphic' symbols. This can get awkward if you want a lot of different styles in your text file, but should present no problems when writing letters.

One problem I found in my version was that I couldn't print the infamous pound sign on the printer while using *Word Manager*, but I'm sure it's in there somewhere!

Multi-Tasking

Word Manager also features a very clever fast/slow print option which simulates multitasking (doing more than one thing at once) when printing. This means that you can choose to have the text printed and if you see any mistakes in it during printing you can change them by editing the text at the same time, then print it out again.

File Reports

I was very impressed with *Word Manager*'s comprehensive file report facility, which gives information on the current cursor position, memory (in characters) used, memory remaining, and the all important word count which is very, very useful for us reviewers. None of these features exist in *Tasword II* but an extra piece of software can be bought which will add them.

SUMMING UP

The main thing that strikes you about *Word Manager* is that it doesn't justify or word-wrap at the end of every line which is confusing if, like me, you've been using *Tasword II* for ages. Also, I was a bit unhappy not to be given a small 'window' at the bottom of the displayed text telling me the line/column my cursor was at. The cursor doesn't flash, and I found life a little confusing at times . . .

Overall, *Word Manager* is a much more professional word processor than *Tasword II*. It contains more features and is a very flexible piece of software. I feel it falls down a little, because in nearly every case you have to access some sort of menu to use the extra or expanded features. Despite this, I feel that *Tasword II* has finally met its match with this very professional word processor from OCP. The package includes a detailed manual — nearly fifty pages of explanation — and a freebie copy of *Address Manager* for 32 column printers such as the Alphacom and ZX Printer. All in all, a tasty package. *Tasword II* watch out! *The Word Manager* has come to take the words out of your mouth.

Price: Tape/Microdrive/Opus Disc Drive Versions £12.95
Kempston & Watford Electronics SPDOS versions £19.95
Publisher: OCP, 77A Packhorse Rd, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8PQ



WIN



A COMPLETE OFFICE SYSTEM FOR YOUR SPECTRUM

Ten runners up will win the PLUS Complete Works from OCP

Oxford Computer Publishing are very keen for you to try their *Word Manager* software for yourself. So keen, in fact, that they have decided to hold a competition for CRASH readers who fancy their chances at a bit of creative writing using *Word Manager*.

The top prize in this competition is very tasty indeed — a Rotronics Wafadrive with the Complete Works from OCP on Wafa and a Quendata DWP1120 daisy wheel printer. Enough to set anyone up in business as a computer bureau! Ten runners up will collect the Complete Works on cassette. Worth around £120, that's a mean collection of software....

OCP publish a suite of five programs, including *Word Manager* that could form the basis of a very useful office computer system built around the Spectrum. *Finance Manager* is an easy to use, menu driven accounting package which would prove useful to any Spectrum owner involved in preparing accounts and dealing with financial planning and budgeting at home or in an office. *Stock Manager* allows the user to keep track of up to 600 different product lines on cassette (up to 6,000 on disk), and deals with invoicing, stock levels and product details interactively. *Address Manager* helps you keep track of up to 400 full names, addresses and telephone numbers that can be indexed in three ways. In conjunction with *Word Manager*, address files can be used to produce mailshots. If the VAT man scares you, then *VAT Manager* could come to the rescue when it's time to prepare those dreaded quarterly returns — it's a menu driven program that can sort out all your invoice details and present an analysis ready to go onto the VAT 100 form.

All five of these business or club oriented programs are compatible with Microdrives and a host of printer interfaces, and can produce professional copy across 80 columns. These guys mean business!

And of course OCP has a foot firmly in the utilities market, with a *Master Tool Kit* containing a number of useful machine code routines to make any programmer's life easier; *Machine Code Test Tool* which should be at the right hand of anyone moving into the world of machine code as it makes entering and testing hexadecimal machine code routines much less painful and there's a complimentary ditor Assembler for putting together that machine code masterpiece.

If all this serious Spectrum using tires you out, you could always indulge in a bit of light relief with OCP's *Video Pool*, *Casino Royale* or play a little chess with *The Turk*.

All these programs could be yours, and if you're lucky, you'll get them on Wafadrive with a printer thrown in! What we want you to do is write an article of some 1,500 to 2,000 words in length that you think CRASH readers might like to see in their magazine.

You could write a fun piece like the Diary of 2186 in this issue, or a serious article on an aspect of computing or the state of the software industry, a short story, a One Act play, an Ode to the Spectrum, an analysis of the serious side of microcomputing or a letter to your Granny explaining what these new-fangled micro thingies are. It's entirely up to you what you write, but you must use *Word Manager* to prepare you entry.

We're going to give you quite a while to get your copy of *Word Manager*, learn how to use it and then create your masterpiece. Three months, in fact — you've got until April 24th to send your cassette containing a *Word Manager* file to the OCP COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE. Admittedly, you've got to lash out about thirteen quid to enter, but even if you don't end up with a tasty prize, you'll end up with a very tasty word processor. Oh, and if you have any difficulty in getting hold of a copy of *Word Manager*, don't forget Auntie Aggie in Mail Order is a very helpful soul. So long as you don't ring her while she's having her din-dins, that is...

Crash Competition



A Wafadrive and Daisy Wheel printer on offer from OCP



DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

JOBS FOR THE BOYS

I would like to turn my thoughts this month to a matter which has been on my mind for some time. As I go about my everyday life I meet people, both young and old, who are surprised at what I do for a living and are then interested in just what kind of a world games software is. In particular, they marvel at how young programmers are, and at how easy it is to enter the field. These are factors which the average CRASH reader will be very familiar with. What deeply concerns me is not the youthful nature of this industry, nor the lack of job security for established programmers, nor the ever increasing standards of new software and the exacting nature of today's programming. No, none of these things worry me and neither should they worry you. However, what should most certainly worry you is that you live in a society that ignores computer software for these very same reasons. We live in a society where people are more concerned with losing their jobs than entering new ones, more concerned with showing deference to employers than telling them what's what (unlike Japan where workers are actively involved) and where factories are closed rather than improved or, heaven forbid, rebuilt.

Recently much time and space has been devoted in the media towards youth opportunities and careers, much more than in my day when there were far more career openings. All the old nonsense is still there about analysing your best skills, aptitudes etc etc. What use is this advice if it leads a pupil down a road where there are no jobs, and where it is nigh on impossible to work on a self-employed basis in the field?

With all due respect to old people, the future of Britain as a trading nation lies with the young of the country. Young minds can be turned to useful occupations or be left to wander in a confused vacuum. The answer does not lie in better careers guidance. The answer does not lie in creating artificial work or forever raking up age-old teenage problems. The answer is to encourage high technology and to train young people in how to use it.

THE WORM IN PARADISE

A CRASH Smash

Producer: Level 9
Price: £9.95
Author: M N, & P Austin

The Silicon Dream trilogy, begun by the text-only *Snowball* and followed up by *Return to Eden*, is now completed with *The Worm in Paradise*. Being the third part of a trilogy, this game is guaranteed a lot of sales but the game will make perfect sense without playing the other two, and it has enough worthy features to recommend it on its own.

The story takes place on the planet Eden, one hundred years after the time of *Snowball* and *Return to Eden*. You are a citizen of Enoch megapolis, the first and smallest of the domed cities which support Eden's population of half a billion people. There is no contact between the human populations inside the domes and the world outside, so rumours of alien life forms on the planet are rife. It is said that flying saucers are regularly seen and that intelligent moles live in deep tunnels.

The game takes place during the reign of the third Kim, and Eden is run as a benevolent bureaucracy. This is the paradise of the title, where the silent majority live in the peace created by full employment, no crime, good housing, and more entertainment than is possible to enjoy in a lifetime. There is no way to challenge the system, but what right-thinking individual would want to?

The politics of Enoch are curious and take Reganomics to their logical conclusion. Governments can theoretically run at a profit, extorting no taxes from their citizens but getting income from such sources as fines for criminal offences. This involves tight controls on services and routine supervision of the populace to catch trouble-makers. Millions of robots, immune from corruption, work tirelessly to run the state as the Government wishes. Robots do all the important work and most of the menial jobs. It is difficult to tell whether humans are the leisured aristocrats, or the pets of robots.



The Enoch Police naturally enough turn in a profit. Fines rather than imprisonment, rewards to informants, summary justice to cut court costs, and fines on every small vice ensure a steady stream of money towards the long robot arm of the law. Enoch hospitals also make a profit, partly by the re-sale of body parts to ageing recipients and partly by charging for in-patient care. Making medical advice freely available via computer and minimising the time patients spend in hospital helps to turn costs into profits. In the larger scheme of things the people of Eden, originally intended as a source for future colonists, are left with no further role to play as the robots and machines mine every asteroid and hollow out every moon in their path, and build people on site.

The story behind this adventure is much better than the normal hotch potch which ac-





companies other games. The plot has real depth and relevance, a bit like the famous Star Trek TV scripts. As with Star Trek this game has a fair sprinkling of humour to sweeten what is quite a bitter task, that of changing an inhuman bureaucracy into a society where humans are worth something beyond just being robot fodder (that is, if I got the gist of the plot right from the amount of the adventure I completed).

You begin within a dream where you find yourself in a garden. Following the worm you feel pleased with yourself for getting somewhere whereupon you suddenly wake up! It becomes clear that you have been dreaming in a pleasuredome and, leaving your visor aside, you can begin the adventure proper — unless you were dreaming of a dream within a . . . . . .?

The Worm in Paradise evolved alongside a 12 month enhancement on Level 9's very own adventure system. Standard features include a 1,000 word vocabulary, a very highly advanced English input, memory enhancing text compression, the now familiar and very much appreciated type-ahead, and multi-tasking so a player need never wait while a picture is drawn. To be honest, the graphics take imaginative skills a bit too far and most of the pictures can only be described as poor. The story, descriptive depth, vocabulary, and the many sophisticated features go to make Level 9's latest a really good adventure game.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: no push over
Graphics: imaginative, but poor
Presentation: good
Input facility: sophisticated
Response: fast
General rating: excellent

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	9
Logic	9
Addictive quality	8
Overall	9

A CRASH Smash

LORD OF THE RINGS



Producer: Melbourne House
Price: £15.95
Author: Philip Mitchell & Beam Software

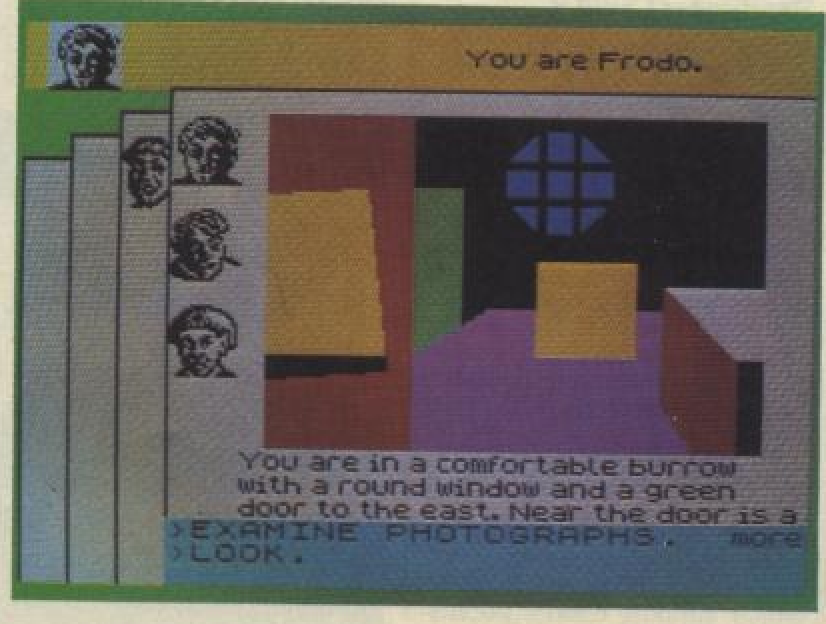
Ever since *The Hobbit* was released by Melbourne House, games players everywhere have eagerly awaited the computer version of JRR Tolkien's greatest work, The Lord of the Rings. *The Hobbit* computer game was widely regarded as one of the best programs to run on a Spectrum and even now it still stands as one of the best adventure games you can buy. Its lasting appeal can be attributed to its immense intricacy of plot and the high competency of its programming. *Lord of the Rings*, dealing with the story found in the first part of the trilogy, The Fellowship of the Ring, sacrifices some of the programming panache of *The Hobbit* in order to offer as wide an entertaining medium as is possible on a Spectrum. Pictures are relatively infrequent, and where they do pop up, are nothing to get excited about. The program is undeniably slow and the glaring white background to the text gives the impression that Philip Mitchell has been too busy with his own pet project to see the great lengths to which other software houses have gone to impress with their presentation.

You might now think that this review is about to concur with one or two others which have fallen short of praising this new adventure. Not so. Considering the enormous efforts made to make this game deep, intricate and entertaining, one can overlook the minor irritations in presentation, speed and debugging and applaud Melbourne House for a very courageous and worthwhile effort in bringing such a monstrous project to fruition. In short the game succeeds in doing what it set out to do, entertain, and I thoroughly enjoyed playing it.

Now that I've got that off my chest let's see what you gets for your money. As with *The Hobbit*, you get the corresponding Tolkien book, The Fellowship of the Ring, which is the first part of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. This Allen & Unwin paperback is more than just a sales ploy as it contains important background and clues to your quest. Furthermore, it contains maps of The Shire where you begin the adventure, and the whole of the western section of Middle Earth by which you can gauge the threat emanating from the east. An impressive booklet of very full instructions is also included, which serves both as an introduction to the game and as a broader intro to the whole world of adventuring. It is a most lucid and palatable guide and does a superb job of introducing quality adventuring to the novice. The game itself spans two cassettes. On each is a challenging adventure on the A side along with its beginner's counterpart on the B side. The beginner's games, like the booklet, are simply superb, introducing the concepts and challenges to be found in the games proper in a very informative manner.

The story behind the game will be very familiar to Tolkien fans but probably be pretty confusing to those who have never picked up on the books. It is the Middle Years of Middle Earth and Sauron the Great, master of the evil realm of Mordor, has tricked a great Elvensmith into teaching him the craft of making rings of power. Deep within the bowels of Mount Doom he forged a ring to rule all others. By a circuitous path the ring came into the possession of Gollum who fled with it to the Misty Mountains and the dark caves that ran beneath them. Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit, found the ring in the goblin's den and kept a hold of it by outwitting the pathetic creature. Bilbo returned to The Shire with the ring, and for the last time, used the ring's curious ability to render the wearer invisible before handing it on to his heir, Frodo Baggins. The ring causes some strange-side effects however, making its owner overjealous. Gandalf, a fatherly wizard, warned Frodo of the malevolent nature of the ring. Making too much use of the ring would see its owner fade into a ring-wraith. Bilbo retired to Rivendell to the east, and the ring was entrusted to Frodo, whose struggle to keep the ring safe from the servants of doom is told in the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

The adventure begins with Sam, Pippin and Frodo at Bag End, Frodo's home in Hobbiton. Merry awaits the party at his house in Crickhollow to the east, by the western bank of the Brandywine river. Now, if the computer game carried on just





like the book there would be little point in playing the adventure. The Beam programming team have cleverly devised a plot which has enough in keeping with the Tolkien work to justify its name, but not so much as to make playing futile. There are new paths, new situations and novel twists which will ensure that a thorough knowledge of the books alone will not give an easy victory. At no point is knowledge of the books assumed, although thorough reading is recommended, if only to gain insight into the fantastic world of Middle Earth.

The first striking feature of the game pops up right at the start, when you are offered the option of playing up to four Hobbits during the one game. The characters of Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin are up for grabs, although the booklet warns that it may be easier to begin with just the one character. Indeed, the beginner's program settles for Frodo only. Even in the beginner's program there is still plenty of scope to influence the behaviour of your Hobbit companions via the use of the influential and highly effective SAY TO command. Often the likes of SAY TO character 'HELLO' is sufficient to draw most characters into conversation. As in most commands which are used often, the programming team have thoughtfully provided the abridged form of (GANDALF) 'HELLO' as an option.

Many of the problems you face will be impossible to unravel without the help of other characters, some of whom will only be helpful if you adopt the right tone or ask the right questions. Your fellow Hobbits will, as a rule, follow your lead and can be made to do most useful tasks as with SAY TO SAM 'CLIMB TREE'.

Playing the game you find the booklet isn't kidding about playability. Your active control of characters in combination with the computer's habit of intelligently keeping the action moving along when you are not controlling things is one of the perfectly enchanting aspects of the game. The program really does its level best to act intelligently at all times.

Going beyond the beginner's program you might like to play the game with friends, each person taking on the responsibility of one furry-footed Hobbit. The commands BECOME PIPPIN or I AM PIPPIN, or simply PIPPIN, will swing the game round so it is played out through the eyes of Pippin until it is changed once more. To show who is playing at any particular time, and to indicate which Hobbits are present with you, the screen uses a layered effect whereby the top layer has I AM FRODO etc along the top with his picture, while down the sides are the pictures of any other Hobbits present. Lower layers show the pictures of Hobbits not currently present in the same location. This use of layers slows the game down — with every new location the layers are re-sorted to reflect any splits or meetings in the groups.

When arranging parties to tackle specific problems it might be worth remembering that Pippin is the most agile, Sam the most sturdy, and Frodo the smartest. Sam, being Frodo's devoted friend, always tries to stay close to him. During the course of the game characters suffer weariness from the constant struggle and their strength declines. The best remedy for low morale is a good meal and a rest, but if the Hobbits should chance upon skilled healers or magical herbs this helps them endure the fray even better. In combat, Hobbits are generally thought poor fighters as they normally live cheerfully peaceful lives in the relative seclusion of The Shire — so they should not be thrown into the midst of gory battle.

Towards the end of the booklet an abbreviated vocabulary gives some insight into the 800 words used by the adventure. The rules which govern the use of Inglish (first used in *The Hobbit*) are related at length and are informative enough to guide even a newcomer to the delights of adventuring. The program is very good at asking for clarification of any input about which it is not sure.

Two features from *The Hobbit* have been retained in this game. Mapping in *The Hobbit* could become pretty unreliable owing to the structure of the game, and so it is in this case. The other feature of *The Hobbit* retained is the need to be ever careful and watchful over what and how many items you are carrying. In addition to adding weight to your burden, some objects increase your effective size, which can lead to trouble when negotiating a small door or tunnel. Liquids cannot be carried without a container and you must ration your acquisitions to just those you can manage to carry.

Lord of the Rings took over 15 months to program. After waiting for so long people may initially be disappointed with the result. The game is slow, the pictures are rudimentary, and, due to the glaring white background for the text, this adventure is almost unplayable on a colour TV. The prose is strangely stilted with descriptions which tell of objects within objects and upon objects, in a very dry and dreary manner. The dubious examples of humour in the game detract from such an auspicious work and there are times when you're not quite sure whether something is supposed to be humorous or not, like, were there really photographs in the original as found described in the first frame? Having said that, the game features a very good and informative EXAMINE command, a super friendly vocabulary which gets just about anything you want to do done, and it takes the interaction of characters to new heights in adventuring.

On the whole, despite unfavourable reviews from other quarters, this adventure is worthy of a Smash as it reveals enough features to place it above the usual release. In particular, its friendly vocabulary and its options on character play add to the standing of an already monumental work.



COMMENTS

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: to be honest, poor
Input facility: well beyond verb/noun
Response: slow
General rating: a highly commercial and entertaining game

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	9
Logic	9
Addictive quality	10
Overall	9

THEIR FINEST HOUR

Producer: Century Communications
Price: £10.95
Authors: Nicholas Palmer & John Wilson



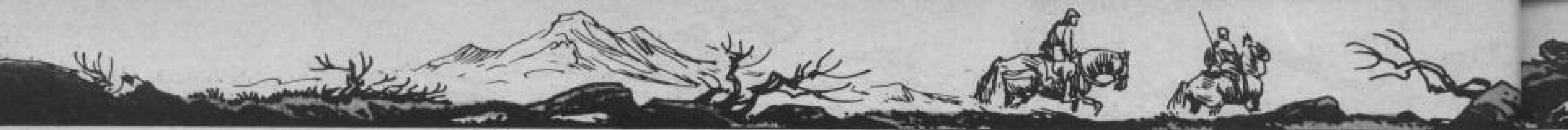
Their Finest Hour is an icon-driven strategy game out of the same mould as Century's previous release, *The Fourth Protocol*. That game was based upon the best seller by Frederick Forsyth and this game has an equally auspicious background as it finds its setting amongst the brave World War II pilots who inflicted Germany's first defeat of the war in the Battle of Britain.

Game design was by Nicholas Palmer, author of 'The Comprehensive Guide to Wargaming', and he has brought his love and knowledge of the genre to the computer screen with true military precision. The game is eminently playable and as your interest in the heroic exploits of these flying aces increases so you find yourself becoming more and more absorbed with the task of halting and eventually turning back the northward advance of the Luftwaffe over southern England.

This game scores on all fronts: design; looks and playa-

Not all news is good news — a raid on a radar station makes life more difficult in your struggle with the Luftwaffe





bility. Design is centred around two map scales — one a small-scale map showing southern Britain where dots represent radar stations, air bases and nine ports, and the other providing large-scale maps showing much smaller areas (eg Devon & Cornwall) where dots inside squares are air bases from which you launch your aircraft, anchors are ports, and five dice-like dots are the radar stations which scan the skies for the approaching German air force. Around the edge of the map screen are the main icons such as anti-aircraft flak, plane allocation to the ten air bases, and repairs to installations at the beginning of each day.

You can alarm bases and direct planes during the day which leads you off into sub-menus where relative strengths can be increased or decreased. For example, the Alarm Sub-Menu gives the choice of putting the crews of an air base on hut, cockpit or plane alert where each represents an escalation in readiness for the approach of Goering's forces from the south. The computer knows which air base you wish to alter by an ingeniously simple method. A cursor glides over the map screens and you place it over the air base, radar station or port you are interested in. You can then use the icons around the sides to alter flak cover (which starts at two anti-aircraft guns per site), plane allocation to bases, or alert status for bases, or you can just request information via the information icon. This last feature is a very useful one as in such an involved game constant updates on information on both your own movements and those of the enemy forces are vital. Reports on enemy aircraft are not just plonked into your lap; a strong thread of strategy runs throughout the game and in this case the accuracy of reports on enemy movements is governed by weather conditions and the watchfulness of the radar crews and ground observers.

This is certainly a good-looking game. The maps are geographically accurate representations of southern Britain while the icons for such diverse operations as tape, keyboard/joystick, plane allocation and repairs are pleasing to the eye and reveal delightful detail. The icons are driven by whizzing a cute pointing hand around the edge of the maps with the SPACE key and selecting with ENTER. Sub-menus and bulletins are flashed up onto the screen in a very neat fashion in keeping with the looks of the game as a whole.

Not only is the game playable, it also has that rich blend of strategy which will ensure it is played long and often. Right from the start you can choose how fast time passes by selecting the clock icon and selecting a pulse rate between 1 (impossibly fast) and 255 (where every move can be scrutinised to the last). 30 is thought an expert's speed and 150 time enough for the anxious.

The attacking German forces are made up of ME109's, the main German fighters, ME110's the fighter bombers, and the HE 111's, JU 88's, DO 17's (Flying Pencils), and the JU 87's (Stukas) which are the (progressively lighter and faster) bombers but the heavy HE 111's and JU 88's do the most damage. The numbers of these aircraft types will vary each time you play and so you will look afresh each time at the initial Intelligence Assessment with its superb picture of Winston Churchill (his picture on the loading screen must be the best I've seen on a Spectrum).

The battle begins on August 12 and can continue until September 21 when the British forces win — if you haven't already been defeated. After each day's play Churchill calls you from his bunker to inform you how the War Cabinet assesses your progress. If your losses are severe Churchill asks for your resignation.

There are many strands of strategy running throughout the game. Well rested pilots are more then a match for the Luftwaffe, so early interceptions of the enemy forces should be on the highest rating of aggression (ie 6 from the choice 0-6). An aggression factor of 0 on your part sees your pilots intimidated by combat and they return to base. If the pilots are tired, and its worth noting that when in the air they tire very quickly, it is probably better to avoid combat unless the enemy force is composed more of heavy bombers than swift fighter craft.

After lunch each day your pilots will be tired and you should recall the most exhausted to base. Squadrons at the end of their tether should normally be rotated to Scotland, especially if the weather forecast is bad, making enemy raids less effective. You may decide not to alert some squadrons in the morning so as to keep them fresh for afternoon interceptions. Care must be taken to ensure German raids do not catch RAF planes on the ground. Squadrons on cockpit or runway alert can get themselves into the air quickly, but unalerted or hut-alert bases run the risk of being caught hopping. However, the higher the alert the more tired the pilots will become so it is not such a good idea to go on too high alert too early.

The Luftwaffe goes mainly for radar installations and airfields at first, trying to crack your defences before they attack the ports and soften them up for invasion. Because of this it may well be a good idea to harden up defences (via the flak icon) along the southern coast radar stations, as it is these which give you the earliest detection of the advancing forces. Needless to say, should all your south coast radar stations become damaged, you are almost blind to the advancing forces, save the occasional ground observation. Your best planes are the Spitfires; they are slightly faster and more effective than the Hurricanes.

As with all complex games this one has its fare share of bugs. At one point in a game I had more planes destroyed during combat than actually existed and this resulted in having P762 planes left. Also, on destroying an entire German force, I was then constantly attacked by zero planes. The way the game stops whenever a message is up on the screen is, to me, a negative point as it gives valuable thinking time during which the players can collect their thoughts and cooly work out the best strategy. This is a luxury not afforded the strategists during World War II. Perhaps the combat algorithm is just that bit askew. During battle you can have the situation where one Hurricane (slower than the Spitfire) holds at bay a considerable German fighter force. The rate at which the pilots tire is a great cause for concern. During just one morning pilots become tired and can actually reach the end of their tether. All the while the advancing German pilots seem to keep remarkably fresh and just keep on coming at you!

Nicholas Palmer wanted to devise a game which gives the player the claustrophobic feel of crouching in a command centre struggling with insufficient material. He has constructed the game so that the computer controlling the German forces, far from being a passive opponent, exploits weaknesses in your defences intelligently. The strategy element varies from game to game, from day to day, and from one battle to the next. The one day option is very useful as the main option takes a long time to play. Because the strategy element is so pervasive the game becomes really absorbing and can hold your interest for a considerable period of time — the one game can last days or even weeks. I think *Their Finest Hour* is a superb strategy game and a worthy successor to the popular *Fourth Protocol*.

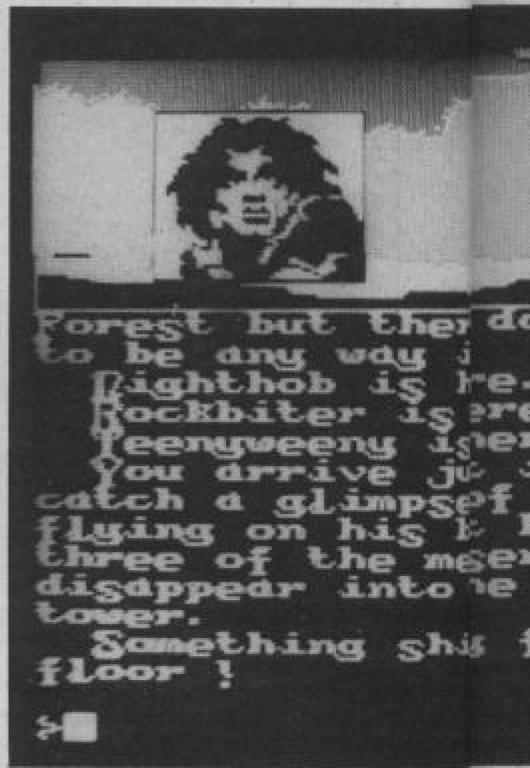
COMMENTS

Difficulty: choice of pace
Graphics: excellent
Presentation: excellent
Input facility: icon-driven
Response: fast
General rating: very good

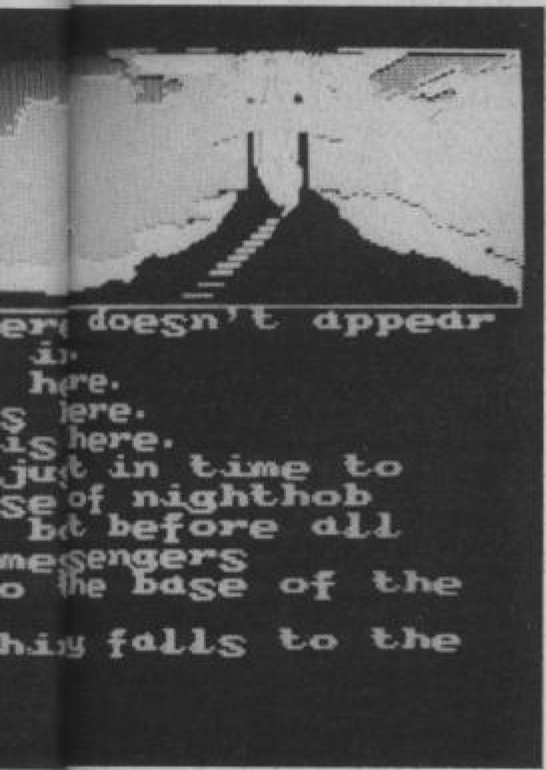
Atmosphere	**8**
Logic	**7**
Addictive quality	**9**
Overall	**8**

THE NEVER ENDING STORY

Producer: Ocean
Price: **£9.95** Authors: **Ian Weatherburn, Simon Butler, Fred Gray**



'A boy who needs a friend finds a world that needs a hero'. So goes the caption at the top of this story which follows the theme of the film about Bastian Balthazar Bux, a boy who discovers a dusty old book on the shelves of an antique bookshop. The book is titled the 'The Never Ending Story' and chronicles the ever changing fortunes of the people of Fantasia. Bastian takes the book and, blowing the dust from its jacket, reveals the cover depicting Auryn, a silver and gold medallion symbolizing the strength of Fantasia. On reaching school he avoids his teachers, climbs into an abondoned attic and settling himself down on an old rug begins to become absorbed in this compelling tale.



Their Empress is weak and the peoples of Fantasia are badly in need of a hero. Cairon the physician tells them of a small boy, Atreyu, who is the only person who can find the saviour of Fantasia. You take on the role of the hero Atreyu. Only through your endeavours can the kingdom be restored to its former glory.

The main characters are familiar from the film. The three travellers, Rockbiter, Teeny-weeny, and Nighthob are on their way to see the eternal, ever youthful, Empress ruler of Fantasia at the very top of the Ivory Tower. Gmork the Werewolf, the main servant of the dreaded Nothing, will range all his powers against you, the one person who can stop his master from destroying Fantasia. Morla, the Ancient One, is an enormous earth-covered tortoise who lives in the Swamps of Sadness. Two animals are of particular importance to Atreyu. Artax is the faithful steed of Atreyu while Falkor, the huge white Luckdragon, will lend assistance to anyone who carries Auryn.

Never Ending Story is an unusual adventure in that it comes on two cassettes with a pre-game side to be loaded before the games proper. Each of the three games has a different backdrop along the top of the screen onto which token graphics are placed to represent the objects you are carrying and the companion who accompanies you. Confirmation also lies in the text of the location description and inventory. Up to five objects can be carried at one time and they are displayed at the top right-hand corner of the screen. Any companion, such as Falkor or Atrax, who is with you will have their picture appear at the bottom of the object display area. Larger illustrations for locations or events appear in the top left. Breaking the screen up in this way is rather novel and certainly works well.

Never Ending Story is a very professional piece of software with really good looks. The pictures that represent the different locations, objects and characters are of a very high quality. It's debatable whether the game would really have needed so many parts were it not for the inefficient programming. Also, some location descriptions partly scroll off before you've had a chance to read them — very irritating and unnecessary, and the input has a tendency to 'auto-repeat'. The lack of an EXAMINE command is quite a serious omission, as without such a command a game lacks depth. At the crystal/telescope problem a powerful EXAMINE command would have been extremely useful and would have added to the player's enjoyment and sense of participation in the game. Taking the first game as an example, there don't appear to be too many problems to solve; three to be exact. Apart from the crystal/telescope problem I can only recall how to get past the thorn bush, and how to get pass the multi-coloured desert. However the game is good fun to play and the solutions to the problems are logical and reasonable enough. All in all an enjoyable romp through the fantastical world of Fantasia.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: not so difficult
Graphics: very good
Presentation: very pleasant
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast
General rating: well worth playing

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	8
Addictive Quality	8
Overall	7

SIGN STUMPS

The mailbag for both SIGNPOST and SIGNSTUMPS was quite enormous this month; clearly adventuring is a real growth area in CRASH. I would especially like to thank the many unsung heroes who write in each month with tips. Should the new filing system I am currently working on ever get going, I will be able to thank more tipsters individually. Without more ado let's get stuck into these here problems:

Never Ending Story ***has been causing never ending problems for adventurers this month.*** D. Jones ***from Treorchy, Mid Glamorgan writes:***

"Please could you help me out of a problem in the excellent Never Ending Story from Ocean?
 Firstly where is the Southern Oracle and how can you reach it? Also how do you enter the Ivory Tower (is this linked with the crystal)?"

whilst Andrew Freedman ***of Harrow, Middlesex writes:***

"I cannot get into the Ivory tower, do you have to get a key for it? If so where and how do you find it? Also how do you get Falkor to fly? When I type 'fly Falkor' it responds 'I don't understand'."

You can't enter the Ivory Tower in Part One of the game. The Southern Oracle is to the south over the multicoloured desert. To be able to fly on Falkor you must first HFU GBMLPS.

Also on the same game Lynda Dixon ***from Middlesbrough is having difficulty entering the cave blocked by thorn bushes, whilst further on in Part Two,*** Mark Cox ***of Consett is stuck at the spider's web.***

To pass the thorn bushes you must CVSO then. To rid yourself of the spiders web simply DVU XFC.

The Hobbit ***is an aged perennial of SIGNPOST and an old problem returns to these pages as*** M. Hales ***from Stowmarket, Suffolk writes:***

"I tried your hints on The Hobbit from issue 23, but when I had killed the wood elf at the waterfall and moved into the forest, 'something dropped from above and stung'. Can you somehow kill these mysterious eyes?"

You can't kill the spiders but as I have stated many times before you can avoid them by waiting twice after each move.

Julian Tedstone ***in Kingsbridge, Devon asks:***

"Please, please, please could you tell me how to get past the Death Beetles in Kentilla and after that the Zalrogs?" whilst Lee Cartwright ***has the same problem.***

The solution to passing the Death Beetles and the Zalrogs is linked. Your first hint is obtained by listening to the Conch Shell found on the beach. This will tell you that Death Beetles hate Blue Mushrooms and if you are carrying them the Beetles will move away from you and not attack. They normally move to the west. If however you drop one batch of Blue Mushrooms in the west location they will move east and kill the Zalrogs.

From Sean Spillman, ***once of Wakefield but now in a boat on the Serpent Sea, I received a message in a bottle requesting assistance in avoiding the Siren song.***

I think some XBY may help. If my memory serves me right I saw some wax from a burnt out candle on the floor in the Urga-Mauls dungeon.

On a popular game of old, Tower of Despair, L. C. Goodchild ***is in a room with a cauldron of boiling liquid, a tiny cat and jar of green paste and is stuck for what to do next.***

UBTUF QBTUF will reduce your size and allow you to progress.

Steven Murray ***of Wigan is having problems with Adventure International's very popular*** Spiderman ***and asks:***

"Where do I find Doctor Octopus and Electro? When I get on the side of the skyscraper why can't I go up or down? What does it mean when it says the web formula is only partially made?"

To climb up the side of the skyscraper you must HVNQ VQ. After this you should be able to find Electro and Co. To make the web fluid correctly you must take the web formula, calcium carbonate and hydrochloric acid, to the chemistry lab and NBLF GMVJE.

Christer Andersen ***from Denmark represents many adventurers when he asks:***

"How do I start the press in the basement in Spiderman? (The computer says something like: 'need 950 pounds to start press')"

To make up the weight drop couch, desk, stunned Dr Octopus, stunned Electro and frozen Hydroman in the weighing room.

Christer is also having difficulty passing the Giant in Knights Quest:

You need the ESBHPO. GFFE it to get it to follow you.

Bored of the Rings ***has proved to be a very popular game providing many problems.*** Simon Hayward ***from Stockport asks how to get money from the vending machine whilst*** Robert Collier ***in Leominster, Herefordshire is unable to pass the Morona Gate. Nearer the end of the game*** Derek Jenkins ***of Cardiff is having difficulty finding the magic scissors:***

Removing the money from the vending machine is very logical if you have played Colossal Cave. ***Simply JOTFSU CBUUFSZ. To pass the Morona Gate ESPQ QFOQFS. As for the scissors, you will find then in the CBS near the TIPQQJOH DFOUSF.***

M. Gawthorp ***from Danbury, asks several questions about Interceptor's*** Warlords:

"Where is the God Lug's house?
What is the torc for?
What is the iron for?
What is the pool for?
How do you pass the guard?"

To find Lug's home you must FOUFS QPPM. To pass the guard you must be XFBSJOH UIF UPSD. Use the Iron to CVZ NFBU from the USBEFS.

Matthew Wait, ***of West Wickham, Kent writes:***

"I have bought Robin of Sherwood which is an excellent game. How do you open the chest in the room opposite Maid Marion's bedroom? How do you get a bow and arrow? And, does the waterfall have any significance?"

You will need a thief to open the chest. You obtain the bow and quiver from behind the waterfall. HP XBUFSGBMM.

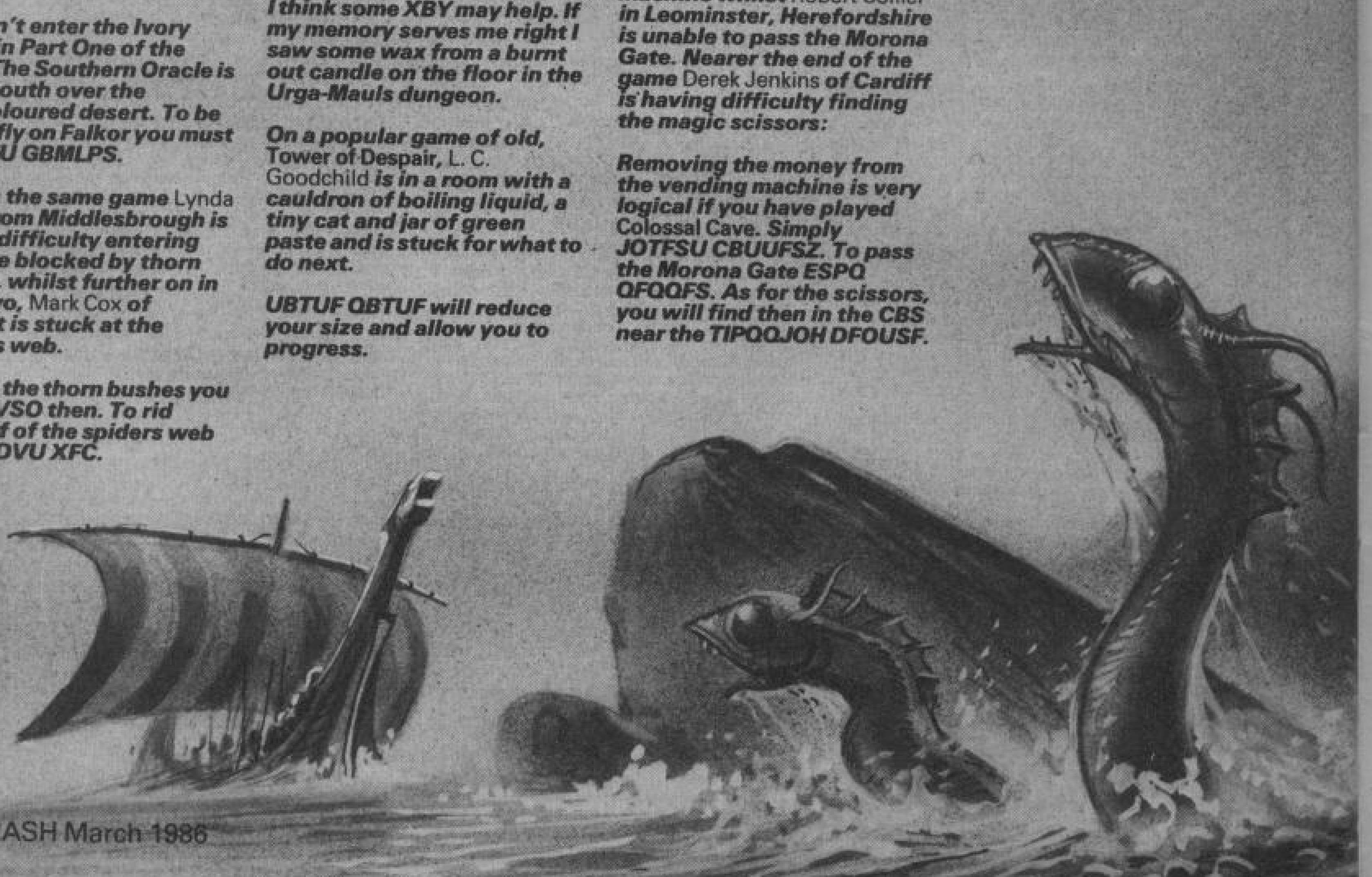
Tarzan is causing problems for Christan Simcock ***of Oldham, in*** Mordon's Quest. ***Christan is unable to find the correct answer to Tarzan's question "Who is the king of the jungle?"***

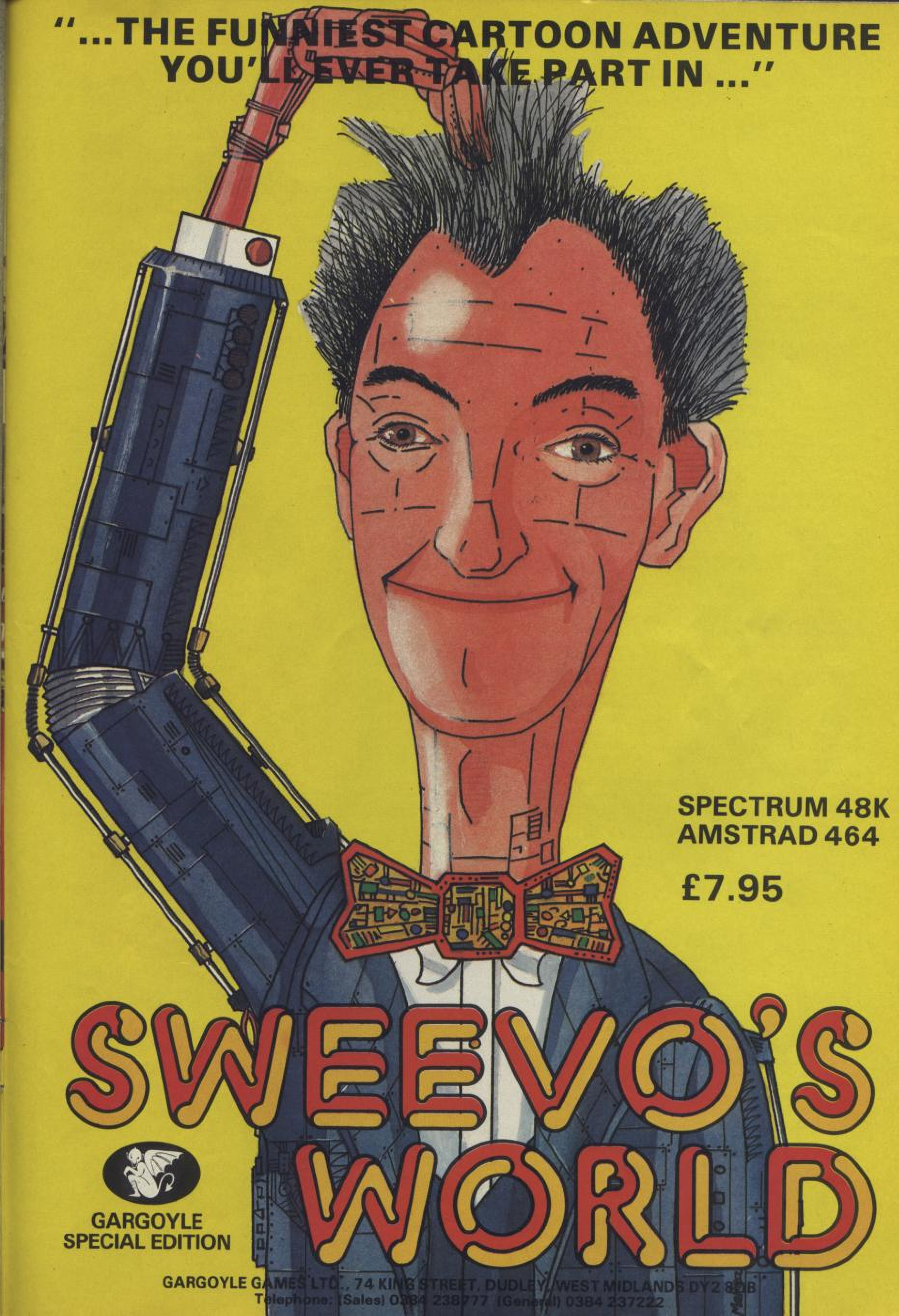
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SETTING OUT ON THE ADVENTURE TRAIL . . .

Dear Derek,
I've played arcade games since I bought my Spectrum and I find them pretty repetitive, so I've decided to take up adventuring. The problem is that I'm not so good at them so I thought that if I started with an easy one and gradually progressed upwards, I would find them more enjoyable. So could you send me a list of adventure games ranging from easy to difficult?

Simon Browne
Beckenham, Kent

Two easy adventures come to mind straight away. The easiest is Terrormolinos ***which was simple enough to allow even the most inexperienced through in order that they could sample the Levert Jones humour. A game made easier by its remarkably friendly vocabulary is*** Mindshadow ***from Activision which is a simply splendid game.***

Two Level 9 text-only classics are Lords of Time ***and*** Snowball ***which are a little bit more difficult but are so full of atmosphere the player hardly notices.*** Lord of the Rings ***is a bang up to date program, quite easy, and especially appealling to anyone familiar with the works of JRR Tolkien (but perhaps expensive for a beginner?)*** Witch's Cauldron ***from Mikro-Gen is a particularly interesting game, as you can change forms from frog to cat to ape while playing. The pictures are very good too.*** Lords of Midnight ***and*** The Fourth Protocol ***offer something a little different to the jaded adventurer.***

DB

SORDERON'S SHADOW

Dear Derek,
I think the adventure Sorderon's Shadow is the worst program I have ever played. If newcomers to adventuring buy this they will be at a loss to explain why they cannot get started.

You save the game. The computer is waiting for you to replay the tape so it can verify it. But you are not told this either in the instructions or on the screen. So you can sit there for ever waiting for something to happen. When you die, the computer is waiting for you to load in a saved game. Again you are not told this. When you do press the load key, you are not told to start the tape. In fact, the screen doesn't change at all.

If you are going north and you come to a hut, and you type in ENTER HUT, you are told there is no hut in sight. But if you now go north you will be in the hut. You can now type in ENTER HUT and you are told, 'you open the door and enter the hut'. In the instructions you are told you can enter the following, 'say to Farris, 'Where is the ring of life? or say to Person 'Let us meet in Domain'. I don't see how you can enter either of the above as you can only type in one line, ie 32 characters on the Spectrum.

Have you seen the help sheet that they send you? (I had to send off three times before I got mine, each time enclosing a SAE.) Right from the start they admit there is a bug in the program. And then they go on to say once you have killed the Krillan come back to the village and Lonar should say 'well done' etc; well he doesn't say that to me. As daft as it may sound, I think Beyond put this program on the market without anyone from Beyond playing it. I don't think I will buy any more of their programs.

John Rundle
Aldershot, Hants

Taking the last point first, I would agree the standard of games from Beyond has been steadily falling, but since the standard of programs released depends on the standard of games submitted by programmers, and considering the fact that Beyond has now been taken under Firebird's wing, it may not be wise to totally rule out a good release from this quarter in the future. As for Sorderon's Shadow, ***The Trail made it quite clear that it did not agree with other reviews extolling the virtues of this game.***

DB

NO GRAPHICS

Dear DB,
Thank you for publishing my letter in issue 23 but your reply was somewhat inaccurate. Allow me to pick a few holes in it.

You say Level 9 have to be commercial by writing graphic adventures. Infocom have no graphics in their adventures but manage to sell their products wherever there are computers. Also, when you mention being commercial you disregard the needs of the true adventurer. Surely being one of the few companies supplying text adventures is better than supplying mainstream products to a market overcrowded with manufacturers.

Milan Petrovich

I have never seen an Infocom game in the UK top 50.

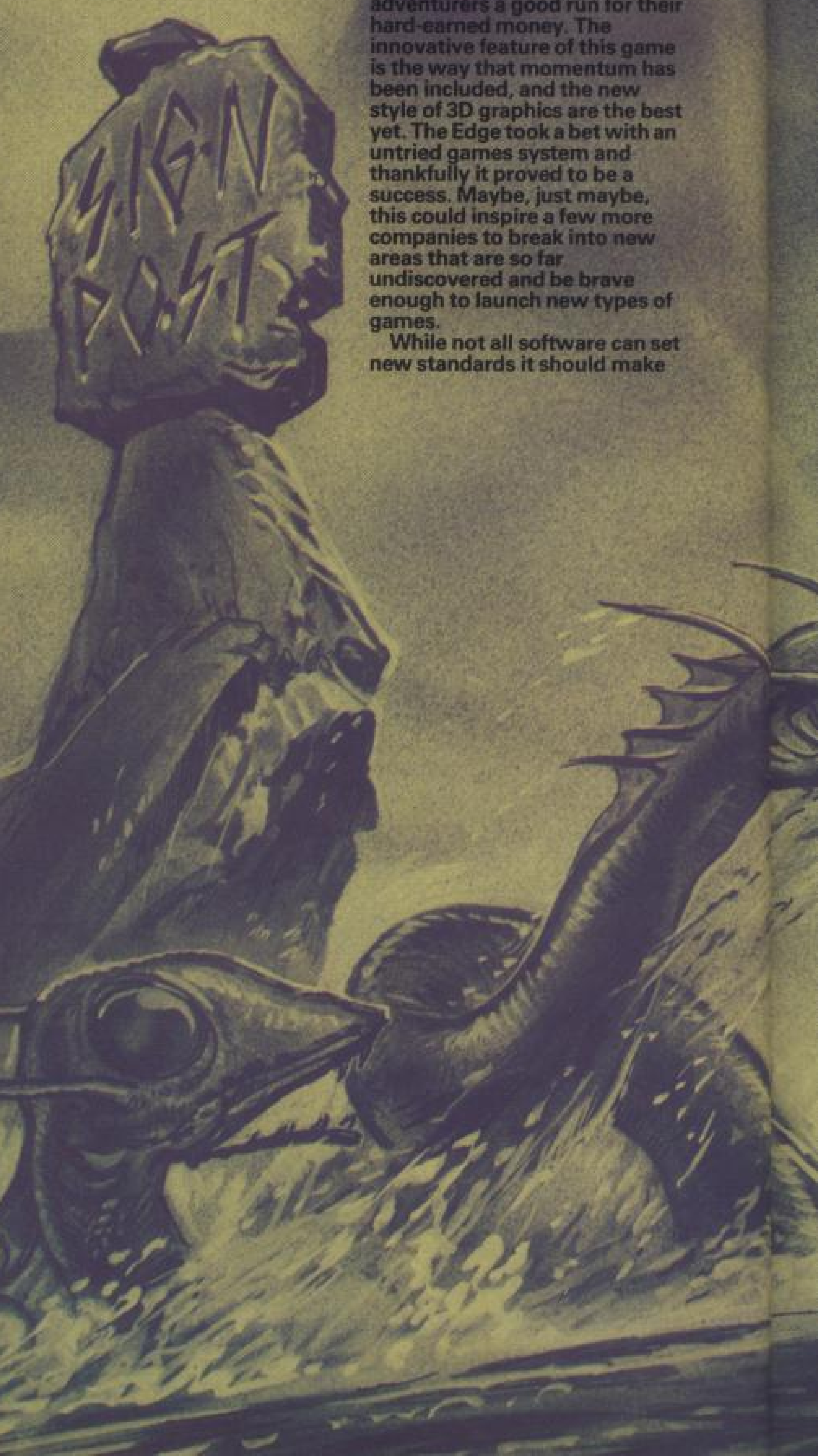
DB

PROFIT, LOSS, FRICTION, MOMENTUM

Dear Derek,
In the December edition of Signpost you relayed your fears for the possible drop in software standards. Now that it has become such a mass market, I couldn't agree more. I feel that few games will appear now that really make you sit up and take notice. Now that the software industry has grown so large the margin between profit and loss will be a very thin line.

When this type of situation arises, the norm is for companies to stay with the tried and tested products and to forget about innovative developments. This is why The Edge have to be congratulated on Fairlight. While it's not a true adventure, Fairlight contains enough locations to explore and puzzles to solve to give adventurers a good run for their hard-earned money. The innovative feature of this game is the way that momentum has been included, and the new style of 3D graphics are the best yet. The Edge took a bet with an untried games system and thankfully it proved to be a success. Maybe, just maybe, this could inspire a few more companies to break into new areas that are so far undiscovered and be brave enough to launch new types of games.

While not all software can set new standards it should make



the adventurer feel like he's playing a new game, not just a slight variation on the same theme. You can only take so much of playing a hero from years gone by with an unpronounceable name exploring an land with an equally unpronounceable name. Just before I sign off can I recommend a game to all hardened adventurers — Mordon's Quest. Although it's a text only game, the locations are very atmospheric, the puzzles range from fairly easy to the hard, head-banging, hair-pulling type. There is so much to see and do I can assure all your readers that it will keep them engrossed for weeks and more likely months. Although there is nothing new about the style or design of this adventure it just pushes previous standards that little bit further. So for all your readers who say such and such is too easy, such and such isn't logical and such and such isn't worth the time — try Mordon's Quest.

Paul Wakeling
Eastbourne, E Sussex

What you say is sensible enough, except for the curious recommendation at the end which represents one heck of a turn about within the one letter. But don't worry, all of us are continually caught out by developing credible arguments only to make a hash of them by giving a super example of the exact opposite!

DB

SEEING RED

Dear Derek,
First of all, what actually prompts me to sit down to the keyboard once again — your Xmas issue opening to Adventure Trail. I agree strongly that the whole scene is gradually sliding into infantility. I remember complaining that programs behaved like 'pernickety morons'. The new trend (and it is to be seen not just in games!) is to treat the user as a moron too.

On the other hand (there always being one), one has to be careful in distinguishing between what I term for myself a 'transparent' (or good) complexity and 'obstructive' (or bad) one. The former gives the game a depth without interfering with the process of play. The latter may or may not add depth, but it gets in the way of playing. To my mind, for example, Doomdark's Revenge, while great in all other respects, is obstructively complex (Lords of Midnight being much less so). As the game progresses, more and more time needs to be spent on each move and more and more information has to be taken into account throughout the move. From your review it would seem that Swords and Sorcery also suffers in this (general) manner. Now, I am only too well aware how difficult it is to design a really good user interface, but while that may be an explanation, it is no excuse. It is unforgiveable to ignore the formidable challenge of user interface design; it is equally unforgiveable to think that the problem is solved by assuming the user to be a moron.

Along a different line, I think you are to be blamed too — a little bit anyway. It was pretty obvious that the general drive towards pretty pictures had to have an adverse effect on the contents of adventures (given the limitation of 48K). You yourself remarked on the fact that your mailbag indicated a strong preference for text only games, yet appeared to remain in favour of the general drive towards graphics.

I always thought very highly of the Level 9 produce, particularly Emerald Isle which was quite excellent (except for the irritating graphics, but those you could at least switch off)! I was therefore really looking forward to Red Moon, especially after your enthusiastic review. The introductory blurb was superb, but it is with the deepest regret that I have to voice the opinion (not unshared, by the looks of it, by other adventurers) that the game is rubbish. Oh, it looks smooth enough on the surface, but the deeper you dig, the worse it gets. As you noted yourself, too much has been sacrificed to the graphics. Also, surprisingly for such an experienced outfit, as you penetrate deeper into the castle it comes to feel increasingly like a random collection of places, named and described in a quite arbitrary manner. What a contrast to Emerald Isle!

I could go on about the curiously static nature of the castle inhabitants and the boringly random behaviour of their ghosts (ever heard of a ghost of a statue?), about the lack of a 'click' when the correct solution is encountered, about the idiotic side-plot with the mirror room, which produces information only an idiot would not deduce unaided etc, etc. I could go on but I won't. I was bored with the whole thing by the time I got to the dragons guarding the crystal (and no, you do not need to do anything about the dog to get there). Since I obviously lacked the means to conclude the game and still had not a faintest idea how to explore under water, I just left the game there. May it rest in peace.

Mike Arnautov
Flackwell Heath, Bucks

Just to show there are no hard feelings for people who criticise The Trail's views I'm awarding this month's £12 of software to Mike Arnautov, a regular contributor to the column.



S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O

Michael Choudhury **from London writes "I completed Beyond's ENIGMA FORCE at 7.49 pm on Sat Dec 21. I converted the Insectoid leader to my ally, then cornered Zoff and blew him up using explosives. When he died he left the Zoff card behind. I then used this to open the door in the Reptiloid armoury which leads to the escape craft. The end sequence shows you in the cockpit of the escape craft and congratulates you on a successful mission. Am I a SUPERHERO?"**

You are indeed a SUPERHERO, Michael. You just beat Daniel Connor **(Dec 22) and** Paul Finch **(Dec 28) to the coveted title. Well done!**

SO, YOU THINK YOU COULD BE A PSYCHIATRIST?

Win your very own GUIDE TO BRAIN SURGERY!

Collect a CANON SPRINT Autofocus Camera Too!

The chaps down at CRL have launched a completely new label — NU WAVE.

NU WAVE kicks off with a fascinating . . . er . . . program, called *ID*. There's this personality lurking in your Spectrum, you see. It's been on earth since the dawn of time and is capable of assuming a variety of forms. Throughout the ages, ID has played an important part in human history.

ID's shattered memories are contained in the computer program which you load into your computer — the poor thing's in a bad way. It's feeling disorientated — rather like the Editor when he arrives in the office after a night on the Old Flatulence Bitter — and you have to coax ID out of its confusion. Talk to it, via the keyboard, and try and build up trust. You can teach ID and learn from ID.

With patience, and a little skill in inter- well, interpersonal, communications, ID will come to trust you and its personality will gradually be repaired. Beware though — a time will come when ID, according to the instructions it received all those millenia ago, will try to take you over.

ID's moods swing from happy, to trusting, to frightened and confused as it tries to make sense of the information you give it. Be nice to ID. Who knows, you could dominate the world. . .



Crash Competition

To get you in the mood for delving round inside ID's personality, CRL have decided to offer a whizzo first prize package in this ID competition. A copy of the excellent tome (LMLWD) *The Advanced Guide to DIY Brain Surgery* is on offer to the winner, and a Canon Sprint camera will be included in the first prize so you can record your progress on film! Twenty five copies of the program which contains ID's shattered memories will go to runners up, by way of consolation. Not everyone can be a top flight Home Brain Surgeon, you see. CRL don't want to flood the market!

Imagine you are Carl Jung, RD Laing or Sigmund Freud. Starting out as a young, enthusiastic psychiatrist you have been given the task of analysing the mind of a member of the CRASH Team. You could choose to rummage around in the consciousness of Robin Candy for instance, or Lloyd Mangram, Aggie Jiffybag, The Ed or even take a quick shufti inside the cranium of your Humble Competition Minion. Record your findings on paper, film — or even make a model if you like.

Reveal the innermost thoughts and secrets of your chosen CRASH person; discover the hangups, phobias and complexes lurking inside his or her mind. Then whizz your entry off to CRASH BRAIN DRAIN, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB making sure it arrives on or before March 27 when we'll be deciding who's the best at analysis. Psychoanalysis, that is. . . .

O.K. Quiz Time!

1 Where can you find over 100 **FREE** software programs a year?

2 Who can you go to for **FREE** round the clock advice and help?

3 How can you get instant news, views, gossip and "hands on" reviews **24 hours a day?**

4 Who gives you **FREE** national electronic mail?

5 Where can you "chat" with 70,000 other micro users?

6 Who'll help you publish your own database for all to see?

7 How can you take part in national multi-user strategy games?

8 How can you book a seat on the 3.15 from Euston–at midnight?

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CRASH. 3.86

The first month of 1986 saw some changes at Micronet. Simon D'Arcy vacated the Editor's terminal, becoming Micronet's Publisher; Sid Smith, Simon's Deputy, moved into the hot seat and is working on a new section — The Sunday Supplement. And a new record was set.

The mood at Micronet is jubilant: there are some thirty thousand Micronet pages on Prestel, and on average each one was accessed ten times a day during January. That makes almost nine and a half million page accesses in the month: a record. Micronet is the most popular area of Prestel . . .

MICRONET

THE FIFTH CHANNEL ON YOUR TV SET?

A great deal has been happening on *The Net*, as afficianados like to call it, since we took at it in last June's TECH NICHE. Perhaps the most significant change has taken place on the *Chatline* front: the service has expanded considerably. There are now two 'Daisy Chain' chatlines, which allow subscribers to send messages for all to see, and no less than seven brand new 'Quickchat' channels have been opened.

The new Chatline service is run on a computer which is much more sophisticated than the one it began life on — the frustrating delays and breakdowns that aggravated Chatline users have largely been eradicated. The seven new Quickchat lines work rather differently to the 100 page message board principle of the original Daisy Chain chatline — they cope with one message at a time, and you can't step through the old messages. New messages on the Quickchat channels appear a few seconds after they are sent, and overwrite the current frame. "Blink, and you'll miss it", as Micronet puts it on their explanatory page.

Now that Chatline is run on a mainframe computer, the Chatline service has been fragmented so that people with a common interest can go to a particular area. Religion, politics and adventure Quickchat lines already exist, as well as a gay line. People dialling up the net can now communicate very rapidly with other users who share their interests. Of course, the personal mailbox facility is still going strong, allowing Net members to communicate with each other, sending personal electronic mail, using ready drawn greetings card frames from the Micronet library if they like or keying in a straightforward letter.

CLUB SERVICE

"Micronet is becoming more and more of a club and communications service", Peter Probert their publicity man asserts, "Increasingly Micronet is becoming the link between home computer users nationwide". About 20,000 people are currently 'on the Net' and it has become the largest single area of British Telecom's Prestel service, accounting for nearly a quarter of the page accesses on the whole system.

The *Gallery* section of the Net has really taken off in the twelve months it has been running. The Gallery allows individual Micronet subscribers to rent a collection of up to twenty six linked pages and then use them to publish their own material — so long as it's not done for financial gain. Soon after the service started, a queue of over four hundred people waiting for Gallery pages formed. The Powers That Be decided that a bit of weeding out was needed — now it costs a bit more to get started in the Gallery, and the people who thought they 'might as well have some pages anyway' and did nothing with them have stopped clogging up the area.

In the Gallery, you can rent up to four frames for four months at a cost of 99p a frame and a 5p editing charge is levied every time you edit one of those pages. Up to twenty two further frames can be rented in a Gallery 'Exhibition', costing 50p each with a 10p-per-edit-charge. So for £15 excluding editing charges, it's quite possible to publish a respectable small magazine on Micronet — much cheaper than printing a few hundred copies. And the potential audience is huge — your Gallery entry reaches into homes containing 70,000 people.

The Gallery service is very much an electronic publishing First for Micronet — currently there are over 250 Gallery exhibitors, and some of the material is very good indeed. Understandably the range of topics covered in Gallery entries is wide ranging — from motorbiking to religion, Net gossip and collections of random jottings. Well worth a browse. And just to keep Gallery exhibitors on their toes, Micronet has introduced an element of competition, publishing a league table of the most popular Gallery slots for all to see . . . Otherwise, Micronet staff don't interfere with the content of Gallery frames, unless they're obscene or illegal, of course.

PLAYING GAMES

Interactive games are getting popular too. Apart from the games run in the Gallery, gamesters might like to browse through some of Micronet's own offerings. In the 'Buttons' section there's a prize adventure running. You're charged a few pence per page as you progress through it, but the incentive is a juicy cash prize which is awarded each month, when a draw is made from the subscribers who solved the adventure. The 'Round Britain Race' has also proved very popular. The player moves a flashing cursor on a grid laid over a map of Great Britain, attempting to find four specified locations. The cursor can be moved North, South, East or West, one square at a time and each move costs a penny. Once again, a cash prize is awarded periodically to someone who has completed the game.

Of course, there's a range of games and utility software which can be downloaded into your computer and saved to tape or microdrive, some of which is free and some of which you pay for.

On the more serious side, a new business related service, Bizznet, has opened, where subscribers can access pages relating to a range of business matters. Simon D'Arcy, Ex-editor and new Publisher of Micronet sees the service moving towards providing more and more useful information:"The idea is to provide information for Mr Average at home who wants assistance in filling in his tax returns, who wants to know where to go to get the cheapest car insurance, who wants to know where to put his money, — which Building Society is offering the best rates, whether or not the Post Office makes more sense than a Building Society, and so on."

More specifically, Micronet wants to provide information useful to people setting up their own business, for instance, and a whole range of new services are on the cards as Mr D'Arcy explains: "The idea is to help people who have been fostering a germ of an idea, who want to

become self-employed by expanding their ideas. Maybe they'll come to rule out, once and for all, the idea of setting up for themselves if they take advice and find that the idea doesn't really stack up — on the other hand, we'd like to be able to give people the necessary impetus to take their idea further. A *Watchdog* area is planned which will be a consumer hunt, taking up the cudgels on behalf of people who feel they 've been conned — perhaps buying a program that won't work or a computer that breaks down and their local store is being rather unfriendly when it comes to replacing the faulty goods — we'll be investigating the matter on behalf of the customer". And a 'Legal Eagle' offers free legal advice on a range of knotty problems.

CLASSIFIEDS

Looking for a job? Micronet can help. *Jobsearch* is just one of over thirty interactive areas on the Net. Run in conjunction with a national employment agency, Jobsearch collects news of computer staff vacancies from recruitment consultants and displays them — vacancies often appear in Jobsearch before they reach the more conventional press and the section keeps up front; it's updated twice weekly.

A thriving classified/small ads service runs on the system. In the *Talent* sections, Netters can advertise their skills, from plastering through drumming to landscape gardening. A *Home Search* service is running, as well as a *Swap Shop* where folks can offer odd unwanted items for sale or exchange and can advertise for items wanted.

The *Contact* sections, apart from the Chatlines, encourage people to get to know each other. At the moment the Agony Auntie is temporarily indisposed (something to do with being revamped!), but the *Graffitti* board is thriving — it's surprising what people have to say to the world! Already several Micronet members have organised evening meets at pubs, and there have even been a couple of marriages as a result of contacts made on Micronet. (Not an activity that Micronet is likely to actively encourage — experience has shown that Micronet Weddings tend to result in the cancellation of one partner's subscription!)

In many ways, Micronet is becoming a CB channel for micro users — of the 20,000 subscribers around 8,000 are Spectrum owners. The publishers encourage special interest groups to flourish. "Unlike a conventional magazine, which has one editor, we've got somewhere in the region of forty of fifty people editing their own areas — excluding the Gallery", Simon D'Arcy explained, "There's a whole range of subject areas which are put together by individuals or groups. A member of the Micronet team oversees contributors — not from the censorship point of view, but to offer advice on the English or graphics, and to keep an eye on what's going on".

Spec-tacular is one such area on the Net which should be of particular interest to Spectrum owners. Stared in December 1984 by Mike Kent, Bob Garbutt and Dr Mike Sun, Spec-tacular contains utility programs, technical hints, news and reviews of Spectrum products and a User to User group, boasting 650 members. The User to User group consists of people keen to get in touch with one another using their modems on a one-to-one basis, and is based on a directory of members. What's the use of having a modem if there's no-one to call up, goes the argument. Apart from Micronet, that is . . .

The new editor of Micronet, Sid Smith, is looking forward to expanding the services offered even further. His personal 'baby' at the moment is the *Sunday Supplement*, which should come online for the first time, on a Sunday of course, at the end of February or early in March. The Sunday Supplement will contain reviews of books, films, shows and carry listings of events around the country. A gossip columnist — 'a doyenne of the industry who will remain anonymous' is the official line — is set to contribute incisive human interest stories, and Micronet's very own situation comedy/soap opera spoof, MACRONET will soon be entertaining folks after their Sunday lunch.

The *Celebrity Chatline* feature, in which subscribers can interview an industry figure live, on line, will be included in the Sunday Supplement but the Celebrities won't all be involved in the home computer industry. Just stars of stage and screen, as it were . . .

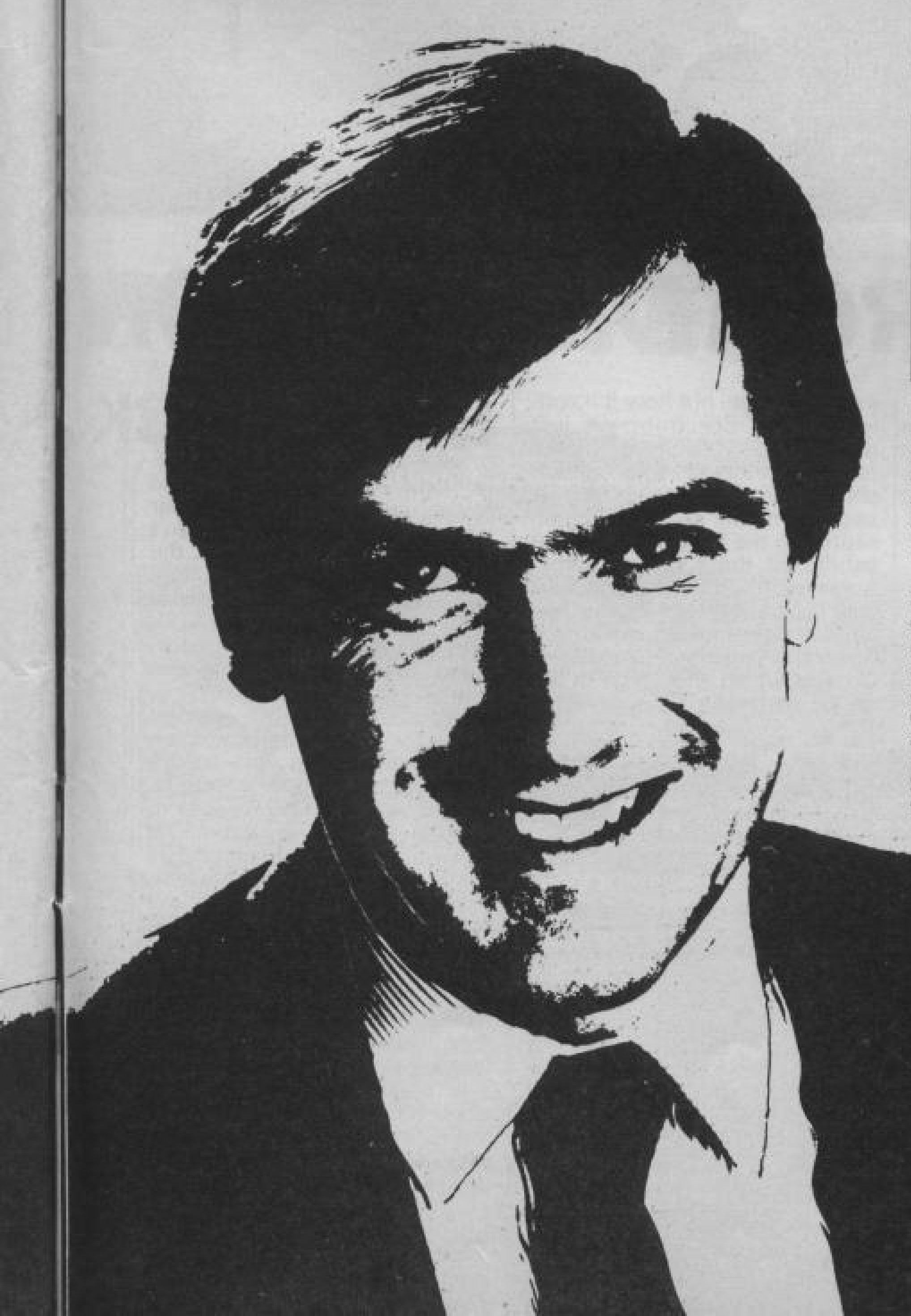
It's quite clear that if Micronet maintains its present rate of growth and keeps the innovative edge, it will become a major force in publishing. At the moment its pages are really only open to people who have home computers — there are a lot of Prestel TV sets in living rooms across the country, but as a proportion of the total number of tellies, Prestel sets are very much in the minority. In the longer term, as technology advances, the potential for a service such as Micronet is exciting — and not just for the people in Micronet Towers.

"Micronet could become the fifth entertainment channel on home TV sets", Simon D'Arcy is convinced. "In the long term I would love to see the remote terminal which is capable of accessing Prestel and Micronet which would free the domestic user from having to use a micro — which is a restraint at the moment, because it's still a fairly technical affair to access Micronet using a modem. You have to enter passwords and so on. I would love to see it a lot easier."

Admittedly TV sets are currently available which allow you to access the broadcast Teletext services, Oracle and Ceefax, and some include a printer, and a few allow you to go online to Prestel. "I'd love to see television sets which allow you to access Prestel automatically catch on — then if there was nothing on the broadcast channels, you could press button five on the remote unit and be automatically connected to Prestel and Micronet. Then you could do whatever you wanted, maybe hook up a computer, download software and start playing a game on the same TV set you were using to watch Coronation Street five minutes before."

Channels One, Two, Three and Four had better look out. Micronet's coming!

Simon D'Arcy, for it is he, Publishing Executive of MICRONET — the most popular part of Prestel by far. No wonder he looks a happy man



MICRONET

Crash Contact:105845851

PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!

IN SPACE, THE KNIGHTS GET LONELY . . .

The chronicles of Magic Knight have been fairly well detailed within the pages of CRASH. *Finders Keepers*, first of the saga, scored a respectable 85% early last year, while the second in the series, *Spellbound*, bounced into the Christmas Special as a Smash. With such hits behind him, master programmer David Jones is now hard at work on a third epsode in the series starring that loveable chap in a tin suit. *Knight-Tyme* is the name of the new game, and we persuaded David to take a bit off time of from hard graft over a hot assembler to explain the scenario and workings of his current project.

After rescuing everyone in *Spellbound*, Magic Knight miscasts the spell he has to use to get home. Instead of winging his way back to feudal England, the poor noble finds himself in the twenty-fifth century aboard a star cruiser. Well, even the most sophisticated of 13th century knights is bound to find arriving on a starship, 12 centuries into the future, a bit disorientating. This is where you come in. Controlling ol' MK, it's up to you to explore the ship and collect all the components need to build a time machine so Magic Knight can get back to his home time.

As with all good adventures, the route to winning isn't very obvious at all and some hard thinking will be in order. The first problem encountered is getting the human crew of the starship to recognise your existence. Luckily, the droid crewmembers obey all human originated orders, and the star ship's transputer is also receptive to input. Ask the transputer what the problem is, and its mechanical mind will point out that the crew members ignore anyone not in possession of an ID card. After searching around the place for a while, a camera and film soon come to light. Taking a picture of yourself is impossibly awkward, so this is where some interaction with the robot crew comes into play. A major part of the problem solving in *Knight-Tyme* requires correct interaction with other members of the cast. Say "Please" nicely, and it's possible to get the robots to take a photo of you. Find a blank ID card and stick the photo on, and you'll be able to communicate with (and give orders to) the humans you encounter on the starship.

The main interface between the player and computer is an extension of the excellent **Windowmation** used in *Spellbound*. This system allows a large vocabulary of commands to be accessed via a user friendly window/menu system. (For more details of the exact mechanics of the system see the *Spellbound* review in the 1986 Christmas Special.)

Knight-Tyme promises to be quite a large game, containing fifty rooms and fifty objects. Sixteen specific characters appear and there are forty nine stars the starship can travel to. Not all the planets are explorable: Magic Knight will only be able to transport down and explore some of them. Pieces of time machine are usually found on planets, but some of the unexplorable planets contain communication centres from which information may be obtained.

Graphically, *Knight-Tyme* promises to be the best of the Magic Knight series. Programmer David Jones was a bit dissatisfied with the lack of variety in visual imagery in his previous releases. After a bit of a rethink and rehack of the original graphic routines, he managed to compact the code required to create a screen so that he could make further improvements to the overall look of the game, and to its scope.

David is fairly confident that the *Knight-Tyme* will be finished in time for us to give it a full review next issue, but meanwhile, feast your eyes on a couple of screen shots . . . At £2.99, the game should be a snip!

UPCOMING ARCADE ACTION

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS

After the massive success of *Commando*, Elite Systems are to continue their series of Capcom arcade conversions with *Ghosts and Goblins*. The game is set in the dark ages, and taking the role of a knight, you have to rescue a fair maiden from the clutches of an evil demon.

The quest, as can be expected, isn't a particularly easy one. Dressed in a rather unwieldy suit of armour you have to make your way through numerous locations to reach your loved one. All manner of evil and horrible minions of the evil demon are lurking in wait for your, including ghosts, zombies, fire-spitting plants and winged demons.

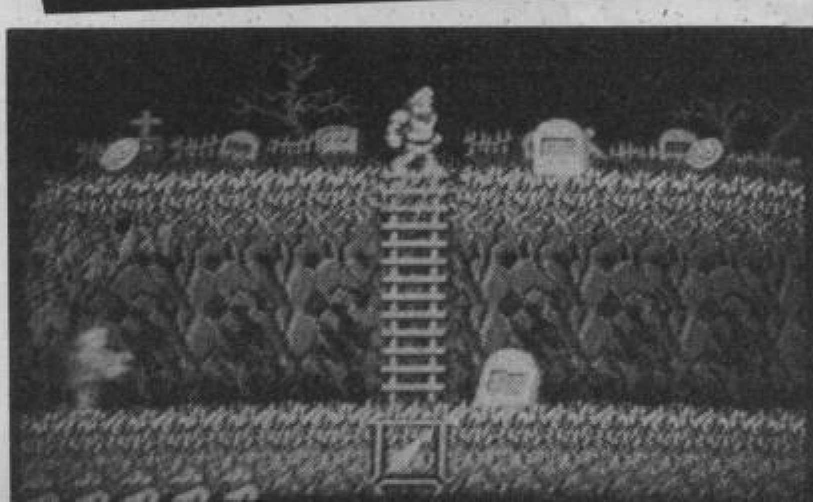
As with all knights, the hero goes nowhere without his trusty sword, or rather swords in this case — he defends himself by slinging shining blades at the enemies as they attack.

As if the demon's minions weren't enough to worry about, the landscape poses problems too. There are gravestones which have to be hurdled, boiling pools of fire, ladders, and caverns to name but a few of the many obstacles.

The graphics on the arcade game are excellent and the playing area huge, but how it'll convert to the Spectrum we just don't know yet. Steve Wilcox assured us that the final version should contain some of the best sections of the arcade original, capturing the flavour and atmosphere of the Capcom game. Apparently an 'excellent four way scrolling' technique has already been developed for the Spectrum version of *Ghosts and Goblins* which should be in the shops sometime during March.

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS

After converting COMMANDO from the Capcom arcade machine, Elite Systems have now set their sights on GHOSTS AND GOBLINS. This is what the arcade machine screen looks like . . .

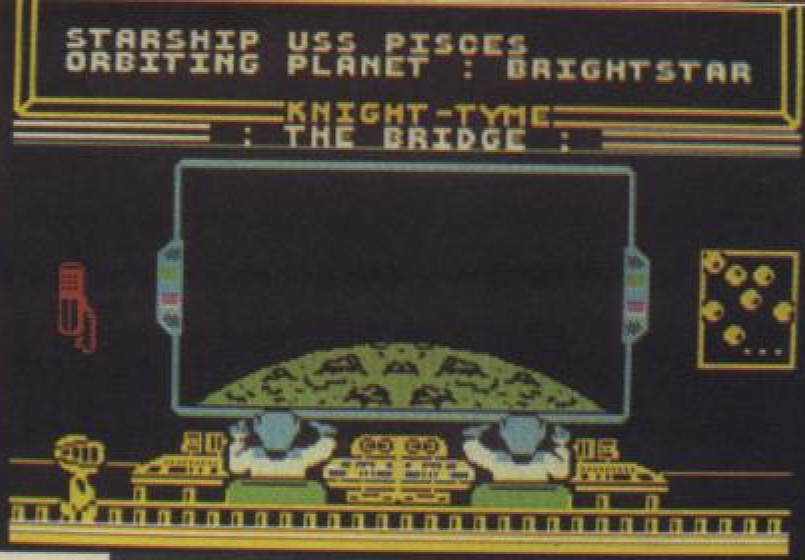


BOMB JACK

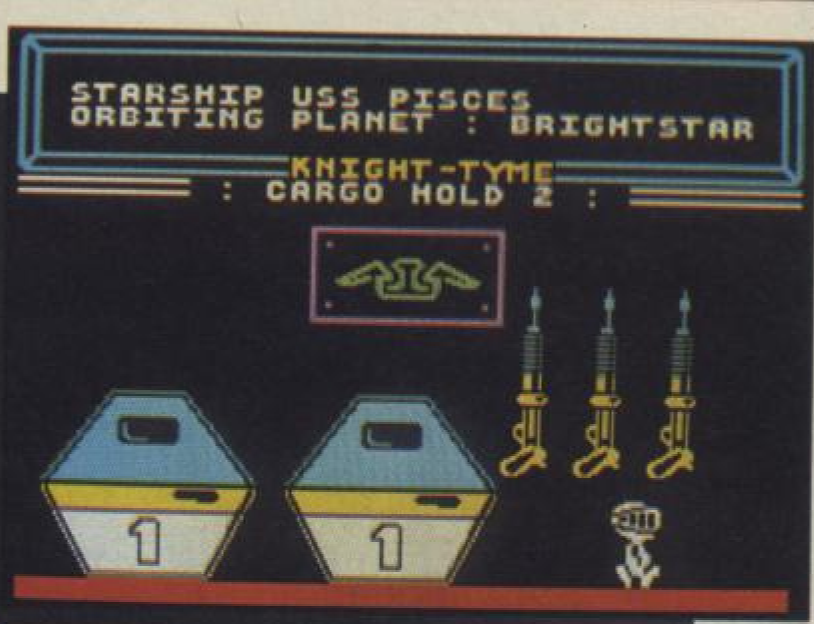
Tehkan's *Bomb Jack* appeared in the arcades around Easter 1984, and although it didn't become a massive success, the game attracted a cult following. The arcade machine boasts some very pretty graphics with five beautifully drawn backdrops and some wonderful sprites.

The scenario is quite simple: dodge the baddies and collect all the bombs to progress to the next screen. There are 24 bombs littered around each screen, usually grouped in vertical or horizontal lines of four. You control the red-caped crusader, *Bomb Jack*, and bound round the screen gathering up the bombs while trying to avoid the nasties. Platforms on the screen act as meeting places for the nasties and can prove a hindrance when making athletic leaps.

A press of the fire button causes Bomb Jack to leap to the top of the screen, and pressing the fire button rapidly keeps him suspended in mid air, so he can



Magic Knight moves onto the bridge of the Starship Pisces, which is currently orbiting planet Brightstar. Will he find a piece of the time machine on the planet's surface?



Inside one of the cargo holds of the starship Pisces, Magic Knight looks for something useful to help his trip home

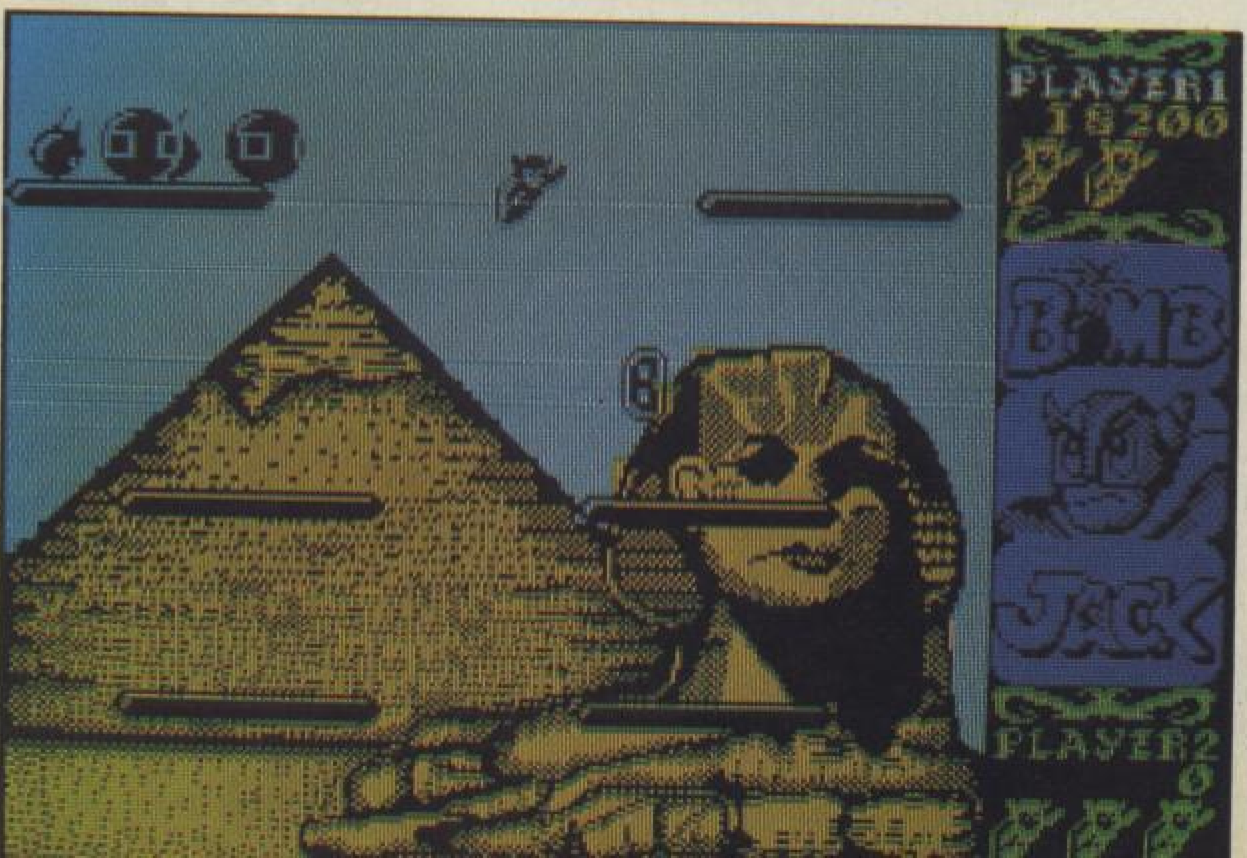


Stumping through the Transputer Room, in KNIGHT-TYME, Magic Knight wants to go home!

FROM ELITE

BOMB JACK

The first screen, in early demo mode, from Elite's Tehkan conversion of BOMB JACK.



move left or right onto a platform.

There are many different types of baddies: birds, screwstops, saucers and rotating balls — all pretty horrible and fatal to the touch. The birds appear on the very first screen and try to home in on Jack. The longer they're left on screen the faster they come after the poor caped fellow. After a few bombs have been collected little stone men start to appear on the platforms at the top of the screen. If you walk under the inhabited platforms the stone creatures fall off and attempt to kill you. On later screens other far meaner nasties appear, coming after you at speed.

If it all sounds a bit overpowering, don't worry — you're not totally defenceless. Every so often a power coin appears at the top of the screen and bounces around. If you manage to catch it then all the hostiles turn into yellow smiling faces for a short while and bonus points can be collected by jumping into them. Soon, the faces start flashing, and a second afterwards revert back to their usual horrible form.

Bomb Jack has quite a few hidden bonuses too. When you collect the first bomb a fuse on another starts to burn. Get that, and another fuse will start to burn. Why collect them all? Well, for a start burning bombs are worth more points than unlit ones, and there's a big bonus if more than 20 fizzing bombs are collected (50,000 points for 23 bombs, 30,000 for 22, 20,000 for 21 and 10,000 for 20). There are other bonuses too — occasionally a **B** coin appears in similar fashion to the power pill. If this is collected then all points gained so far apart from firebomb bonuses are multiplied by two. Up to four **B** coins can be collected on each screen giving a maximum of 5 times points.

When the five screens have been completed the game reverts to the first background again, only this time the platforms are re-arranged in a more devious fashion and the baddies emerge and move a lot quicker. Very occasionally a coin with an **E** appears. If *Bomb Jack* can collect it before it disappears then a bonus life and 3,000 points are awarded.

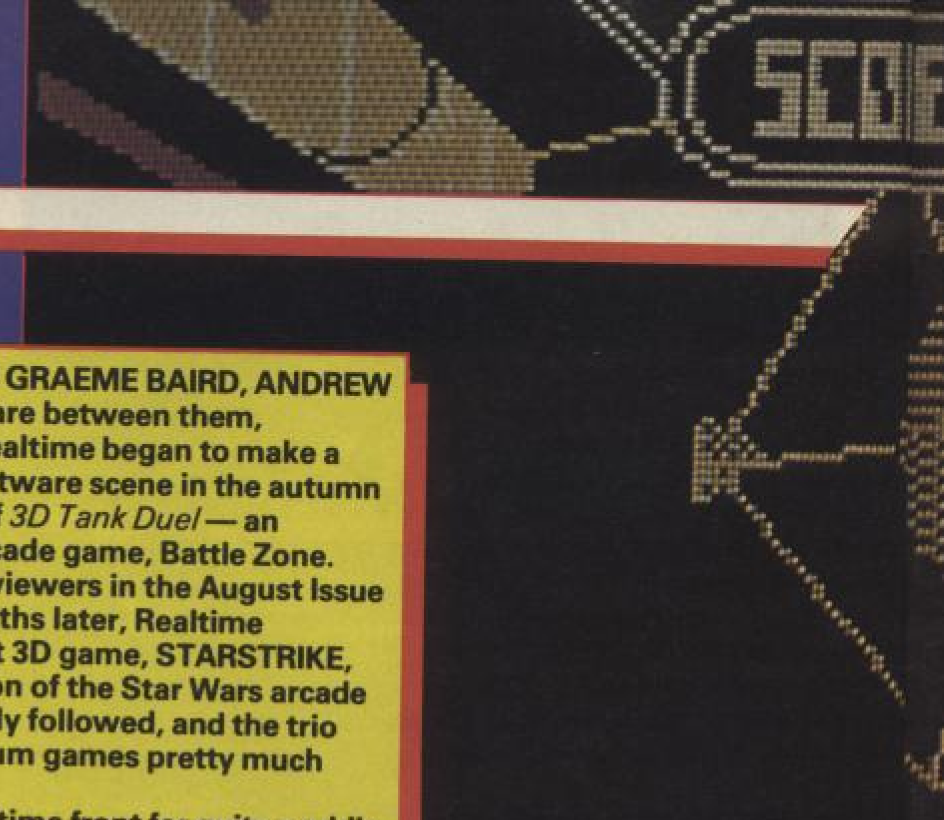
The Spectrum game was very incomplete when it was sent to CRASH Towers, and only had one screen working. Steve Wilcox of Elite Systems, however, said that the final version would feature all five screens and all gameplay elements of the arcade version, including bonuses. The completed game should be in the shops about the time you read this, and *Bomb Jack* fans may find something of interest on Page 44 of this issue.

PREVIEW



The programming team of GRAEME BAIRD, ANDREW ONIONS and IAN OLIVER are between them, REALTIME SOFTWARE. Realtime began to make a mark on the Spectrum Software scene in the autumn of 1984, with the release of *3D Tank Duel* — an excellent version of the arcade game, Battle Zone. Wow! went the CRASH reviewers in the August Issue that year. A few short months later, Realtime launched another excellent 3D game, STARSTRIKE, this time an implementation of the Star Wars arcade game. A CRASH Smash duly followed, and the trio seemed to have 3D Spectrum games pretty much sewn up.

All was quiet on the Realtime front for quite a while — until a few weeks ago, really, when they came to show us progress on their latest 3D supergame.



REALTIME STRIKE ST

The rest has obviously done them good — they can't be bothered with wire frame 3D graphics any more. Having done an awful lot of hard sums and delved into the realms of some very complicated mathematics indeed, Realtime has developed a method of producing fast moving shaded graphics in 3D. Solid stuff, indeed, as we saw in the demo sections of their new game *Starstrike II*.

The scenario follows on from *Starstrike I* — once again you are pitted against The Outsiders, only this time your mission is to wipe them out once and for all. The game will contain five star systems each of which contains a number of Home Bases which you have to destroy. Once you've eliminated these, it's time to have a crack at the Main Base in the central star system.

Andy Onions (whose parentals live in Ludlow) popped into the office to let us have a look at the way *Starstrike II* was looking. We had a chat about the scenario and a peek at some of the completed sections of the game — which should be completed and in the shops by the time this issue of the magazine is in your hands. Don't be too surprised if the final version of the game is a little different to the game described here: fine tuning still had to be done when we saw the demo sections. The graphics will be the same, though.

The mission begins with your craft sitting in a Support Module. Although your craft can travel between the planets in a star system under its own power, you must return to the Support Module to enter hyperspace and travel between systems.

Arriving in a star system, you have to fight your way down to the surface of a planet. First task in the sequence is to find one of the pentagonal space stations and shoot the triangular pods hanging on the nodes of the outer pentagon. This allows you to dock with the station, by aiming the central sight at the middle of the black void that opens up in the middle of the rotating pentagon.

After docking, you enter the hangar section of the game. Your craft is propelled inexorably (LMLWD) towards an irising door at the far end of the hangar. To avoid being splattered against the wall you have to shoot the three triangular iris controllers grouped around the doorway. Timing is of the essence, as the iris freezes when the third controller is destroyed. If you feel cocky and want to collect a few extra points, blow away the three dimensional ship parked in the middle of the floor . . .

Leaving the hangar, you enter a another section in space (not complete when we saw the demo). Essentially, it will be a bit like Asteroids, blasting debris and space mines (and avoiding some non-blastable objects) in order to survive. Unlike Asteroids, this section will be played from the cockpit of the ship, with a head-up display.

Next comes the space shoot em up section where you get the opportunity to meet and try to destroy a whole variety of ships that loom up from the depths of space in stunning 3D. When ships are destroyed, they leave behind fuel pods, which can be gathered and used to replenish your tanks. Be quick, though. The banana-shaped enemy craft is a fuel scoop which will try to beat you to the pods.

Survive the shoot out, and it's into the penultimate (LMLWD again) section of the game, also still under development. you are on the surface of a planet and using the head-up display you'll have to bomb targets on the ground. The Duct comes after the ground section — flying along a trench you have to avoid moving barriers, ramps and rotating fans. This last phase of the attack sequence boasts a novel control method: acceleration and deceleration only takes place when you push up and down on joystick and hold fire at the same time, otherwise your craft travels at a constant speed and the joystick is used to manoeuvre. You can't dodge around and change speed at the same time. Survive The Duct, and zowie, the Finale and it's time to move onto another planet or system . . . .

In the finished version of the game you may be given the option of skipping the docking and hangar sequences, which may be an advantage if you find you're not so good at those sections, but skipping a section means a longer spell in the next part of the game, and it will be harder to survive . . .

You have four laser cannon grouped around the screen, one in each corner firing onto the central sight in pairs, alternating between the top and bottom cannon. Traditonally enough, they heat up with use and cut out if they get too hot, refusing to work until a lower temperature has been achieved. Thus autorepeat merchants are foiled from blasting away endlessly.

The fuel gauge level drops as you drive, and running out of fuel effectively ends the game — all you can do is hover motionless, waiting to be wiped out. The force field that protects your craft is damaged by collisions — too much damage removes your shields completely and the next impact ends the game. Fuel can be collected from pods left by vanquished ships and returning to the Support Module allows



ARS AGAIN

Prior to docking with a Space Station — when accurately hit, the triangular nodes at each corner of the pentagon fly off, as one is doing in the left half of the picture.



Having detatched all the nodes, the space station's hangar door opens and you have to fly in.

you to top up your tanks. Occasionally, some fuel can be allocated to strengthening the shields.

The computer panel, in "demo mode" in the pictures here, will be used to provide status messages. A mapping system and a scanner readout which gives the positions above and below you of all other objects sharing your space can be called up to the main screen at will during the game, appearing automatically when the main display is empty.

All in all, *Starstrike II* looks set to be a stunning game. It's just a shame you couldn't have seen the moving demos we were treated to — the pictures here simply can't do justice to cunning 3D effect Realtime have achieved.

The result of all those hard sums Realtime have been working on should be available for the very reasonable sum of £7.95. Right now.

Inside the hangar there's the parked ship on the floor to the left, and ahead of you the iris through which you must fly.



One of the attacking ships in the space shoot em up sequence, showing well how the solid 3D looks, sadly this static picture does no justice to how good it looks.





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Does that look like a new heading to you? I was promised one for THIS month but will it appear? he says optimistically. As well as the promise of a new heading the powers that be have granted me £20 of FREE software to give away each month to the best tipster, surely that's an incentive to get you scribbling your games knowledge down?

With Christmas well and truly gone now it's time to look at the wreckage left behind. There seems to be quite a few GOOD games out on the market at the moment so now is an excellent time to start playing games seriously especially with these cold winter's months keeping everybody indoors. I would welcome tips for *Zoids*, *Swords and Sorcery* and any other decent games that are floating around.

CRASH's circulation is increasing every month and subsequently my mail bag is getting bigger and bigger. Therefore I have very little time to reply to readers' enquiries. So I'm afraid to say I can no longer answer personal letters, but if it's something to do with mistakes in pokes etc I usually try and rectify it in the magazine. Sorry there is no longer time to enter into personal correspondence. While on the subject of writing letters, when you sign your name please print it! That makes life a lot easier and you wouldn't want your name spelled wrongly after all that hard work you put into playing games, would you?

ZORRO

If you're stuck in US Gold's latest release then have a look at these tips as sent in by Christopher Wilson **of Migton. He did send in the entire solution but I've split it into two parts. The second part will appear next month.**
Right on with the tips then . . .

1. Go up the vine on screen 1 and collect the handkerchief that the Senorita drops.
2. Now go to the top of the screen that contains the Palm tree and press the fire button when you are positioned next to the boot.
3. With that done go to the hotel room and collect the glass bottle. Then proceed to the room with the drunk in it. Give the bottle to him and wait until he lies down. You can now use him as a trampoline!
4. Return to the hotel room and collect the branding iron with the Z on it. Then go to the room with the bull in it (near the start screen). Place the iron in the fire and jump up and down on the nearby set of bellows. Collect the iron, which should be red, and prod the bull with it. You can collect the object that was next to the bull.
5. Return to the hotel room, again. Collect the bell then go one screen right and place it on the left hand bell holder, which is at the top of the screen. Go back and get the bell again but this time place it in the right hand bell holder. A hole should appear in the ground but don't climb down it yet.
6. Go to the start screen and climb down the well. Go right and then down and collect the plant. Go back up and jump across onto the ball and wait. When the platform returns jump onto it and drop the plant. Wait until your platform reaches the bottom and then go back to the room with the drunk. Go to the top level of that screen and try and force a guard to land on the chandelier, forcing the box up. Go down this hole and collect the chalice but you will just have to wait until next month for the final thrilling instalment of the *Zorro* solution.

ELITE

The Firebird mafia (admitedly a bit squiffy at the time) have consented to my revealing the cheats in *Elite* so here they are for you to drool over (and I get to keep my fingers). Thanks to Phil Wilkins **of Felix for providing information on the missions.**

SUPERNOVA

Sometimes when you emerge from hyperspace the viewscreen changes to red and you get the message 'FUEL LEAK'. A few seconds later the message 'MAYDAY CORIOLIS IN DANGER' is received. This message re-occurs at regular intervals. Get to the docking station smartish and you will receive a message (press the Buy Cargo key to get it). Answer 'Yes' to the question and you will find that your cargo bay holds some refugees. After launching, hyperspace straight away otherwise your ship will be destroyed by the Supernova. Dock near another planet and use the Sell option to end the mission and receive your award.

CLOAKING DEVICE

In any universe but universe 1 you sometimes get attacked by a fleet of Asps where one fo them flickers on and off. Destroy this one and pick up the debris left behind. You will now have a Cloaking Device. This is activated by pressing Y but don't leave it on for too long because it drinks your energy. Particularly useful in Witch Space.

INVASION

When your rating is high enough you will get a message informing you that a particular planet has been invaded. You will then be given an ECM jammer to use on the space station that you must destroy. Fly to the space station of the named planet destroying Thargoids as you go. When you approach the station activate the ECM jammer and launch a missile at the space station. Then hyperspace to a new system and dock with the space station to get your award.

WITCH SPACE

In the booklet Witch Space is mentioned briefly. Contained in Witch Space are lots of lovely Thargoids just waiting to be killed. To get into Witch Space freeze the game then press F then unfreeze. To get out of Witch Space freeze the game press F again and unfreeze then Hyperspace.

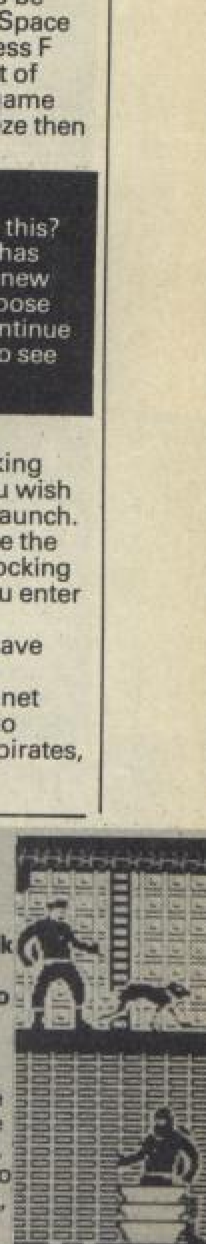
THE CHEAT

Surely everybody knows this? Anyway when the game has loaded press Y to Load a new commander and then choose the Save option. Then continue the game. Just try it out to see the effect.

CHEAT THE SECOND

When you are in the docking station choose where you wish to Hyperspace and then launch. Now turn around and face the space station and start docking manually. Just before you enter the station press H to Hyperspace. When you have docked you will be in the docking station of the planet where you wished to go to without any hassle from pirates, good eh.

SABOTEUR



I've got some pokes for this one but Aubrey Lim **of Thorton Heath has sent in these tips to complete levels 1 and 2 so I think the pokes can wait until next month. Just follow the instructions printed below. While playing the game it is best to kill off the dogs as fast as possible because they drain your energy quickly.**

Right, right, right, right, right, right, down (use the ladder to the right of the screen), right, up, right, down (on the ladder to the left), down, down, down, left, left into tube number 1, left, left, left, left, down, right, down, down, down, right, down, left, into tube number 2, left, up, up, up, up (second level), up, up, right, right, right, down, right, up collect bomb, down, left, down, down, left, left, up, up, up, up, right, right, get terminal (swop bomb for disk), left, left, down, down, down, down, down, right into tube 2, right, up, left, up (use ladder on the left), up, up, right, right, up, up, left, left, up, left, left, up, onto second platform, jump across to the right, jump again to the right, up, left, Helicopter up!!!
(phewwww)!

THREE WEEKS IN PARADISE

I've had lots of tips for this one but Iain Smith **of Dumfries presented them in an easy to understand manner. Next month I'll tell you how to rescue Herbert.**

To Rescue Wilma

First of all get the mint from behind the sign outside the Trading Post then get Wilma's Handbag from the beach, to get to the beach go through the picture in the room that contains the table. As long as you have the Handbag in your possession the crocodile will not harm you. Go to the screen with the Ice cube in it and press the Action key. Now pick up the Hole and go right until you are just past the crocodile, now drop the Handbag. Take the Gold fish bowl and the Hole to the Wishing well screen, stand at the far left of the screen and press the Action key. Go left into the new screen and take the Skeleton key, the spider will not move as long as you have the Bowl.

Go through the picture again and into the sea, pass over the locker and the door will open. Take the Spinach and drop it in a convenient place. Go back to the room with the picture in it and get the stuffing from underneath the table, go to the room with the big bird in it. Take the Egg but don't drop the stuffing while you are in the same room as the big bird. With the Egg and the Spinach proceed to the room that contains the sign 'Old Faithful', now pull the rope and run to the water. Jump up the geyser. Jump into the nest and swap the Spinach for the Bow and Arrows. Now drop down and drop the Egg. Go to the screen that contains Wilma and shoot the native with the Bow and Arrows.

Proceed to the screen with the well in it and jump down. Go to the centre of the well and press the Action key. Take the bottle and climb out of the screen by going to the right of the screen and keeping the Action key depressed. With the Bottle and the Corkscrew return to the crocodile screen. Get the Bottle and the Corkscrew past the crocodile one at a time by using the Handbag. Standing over the Coconut with both of the objects press the Action key. Take the Bottle of Oil and the Blunt axe to the screen with the hut and the car. Pass over the front wheel of the key and press the Action key. With the Sharp axe return to the screen with Wilma and cut her down by pressing the Action key.

CYLU

Christopher Shearlock **of London has sent in these tips for Firebird's** *Alien 8* **look alike.**

When the game starts go to the room on the left and collect the fuel pack. Then go to the room below the start and collect the book. Return to the start room and face the computer and press the Use key. The book has been deposited in the computer. Soon you will be running low on fuel so get the fuel pack ready by selecting it for use. To disable the force fields, collect the silicon chips marked CPU and deposit them in the computer. The chips are numbered and they switch off the force field with the corresponding number. All items other than silicon chips have to be collected because they have specific uses.

SIR FRED

John Wright **and** Corin Wilgrass **of Norwich have kindly supplied these tips for the excellent** *Sir Fred*, **but does anyone know how to open the doors in the dungeons?**

ARROWS
Used for killing Bowmen and for hitting switches.
STONES
These can be used for killing things such as octopi, snakes, bats and other animals.
BOTTLE
This has only one use, to get the ferrymen across the river.
MATCHES
These are for blowing up the purple bags of dynamite.
ROPE
Only any good for getting down from high places.
SWORD
Bit obvious this one but it is essential.
PIPE
Used for making the ropes that you can't pick up.
TORCH
Very useful in dark rooms.
MEAT
Its only use is for getting past the Pirhana.
CHICKENS
Used for food. If your energy is low eat one.

ASTROCLONE

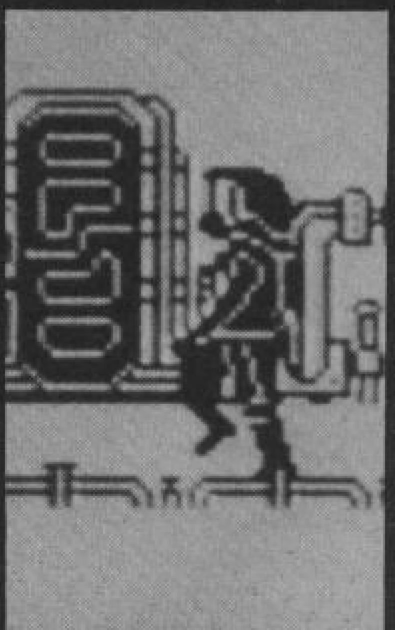
After months of persevering with the game, here is the final installment of the solution. So get battling with those Seiddab and you may win through to see the final effect.

ULTRON **— The Final Base**

Using the Hyprograv lift from Automata, the neutron mass in Spectrus was obtained. The Visiray from Technibo revealed two Isocases on Frontios hidden in caves marked with a triangle sign, the mark of the Imperium. One of the Isocases had to be opened by brute force using a hammer, inside a sonic key was found which opened the other Isocase. In the other case an Activator was found. The Alpha card was addressed to Altos and when it was inserted into the surviving terminal a message was revealed, the location of a room that contained a Securipass.

Once the Clone had arrived at the location described it took much groping about before the pass was found, near the door. The pass opened the locked door in the crystal caves, where the reciprocata was hidden. The neutron mass was then placed in the reciprocata and activated with the activator.

Ultron was heavily defended. Many ships were lost in the assault before the last of the Sei cruisers had been blown from the void. Taking the Ultron Mass and the Acron device the first warrior descended. Many Kri which guarded the upper level were vanquished with the Acron Device. On investigation of the upper level a carefully hidden lever was discovered. On insertion into a wall socket,



power was turned off and a missing component replaced in an electronic circuit panel. A beamer was activated in another room.

On beaming down, the Clone found several uncorrupted robots. Suspended for 2000 years, the Clone's presence triggered age old defence mechanisms and the robots sprang to life, the Clone was amidst a droid battle. Joining forces with the smaller uncorrupted Sentinel droids, he fought against the Battle Cyborgs. With the battle over and the remnants of the Paradroids (as their battle cohort was known) strewn across the deck, a high lever was pushed using a laser bolt, a beamer to the upper level was activated. The Clone retrieved the Ultron pass to open a blocking door where he met his deadliest challenge. In a small corridor three energy fields that destroyed on contact moved towards him. Rather than face the field with his laser the Clone lured the fields to the end of the corridor and sidestepped into an adjoining room just before contact was made. Running along the corridor into a heavily guarded room, a lever was found that deactivated the deadly energy trap. Ship after ship of Clone's made the descent to take on the Battle Cyborgs who had a military prowess rating of 999. Few Clones survived.

A sonic key hidden in a laser turret opened a wall safe containing a Deactor. This, when activated with a battery, was able to deactivate the remaining defences of the base. The Sonic key also proved to be the pass for a heavily guarded Isocase. This contained a securipass. A keypad, once deactivated, opened many wallsafes containing code cards. Also found was a Password program which had to be debugged with the toolkit designed to do the job before the password was given. The correct codes were inserted in a terminal that was in the room to which the Securipass had given access. The terminal issued the final pass.

The bomb was brought to the final room and the door opened with the final pass. The bomb automatically activated when it was placed on the warp cubes, destroying them utterly. The mission completed, the remaining Clones relaxed. The Sei no longer posed a threat to the Humnan race, for the time being at least.





GUNFRIGHT

This is definitely my favourite Ultimate game and now, thanks to J Stopps **and** R Bayliss **of Didcot, some of its secrets are revealed.**

Between killing each round of outlaws you will receive a bonus of $2000 and then you will have the chance to get more money by shooting the money bags, gradually this screen gets faster. At the beginning of group 3 bandits a new monster appears, tumbling weed. Just to make matters worse the fine also increases. As you progress through the game the reward for bandits increases. The first bandit is worth $350, the second $700, the third $1500, the fourth $2000 and so on.



BACK TO SKOOL

The follow up to last month's tips reveals how to finish the game completely but I will try and get hold of some pokes because the game is still tricky to play even if you know what you are doing! Thanks to Geraint H Jones **of Anglesey and** Andrew Mends **of Draycott for these hints.**

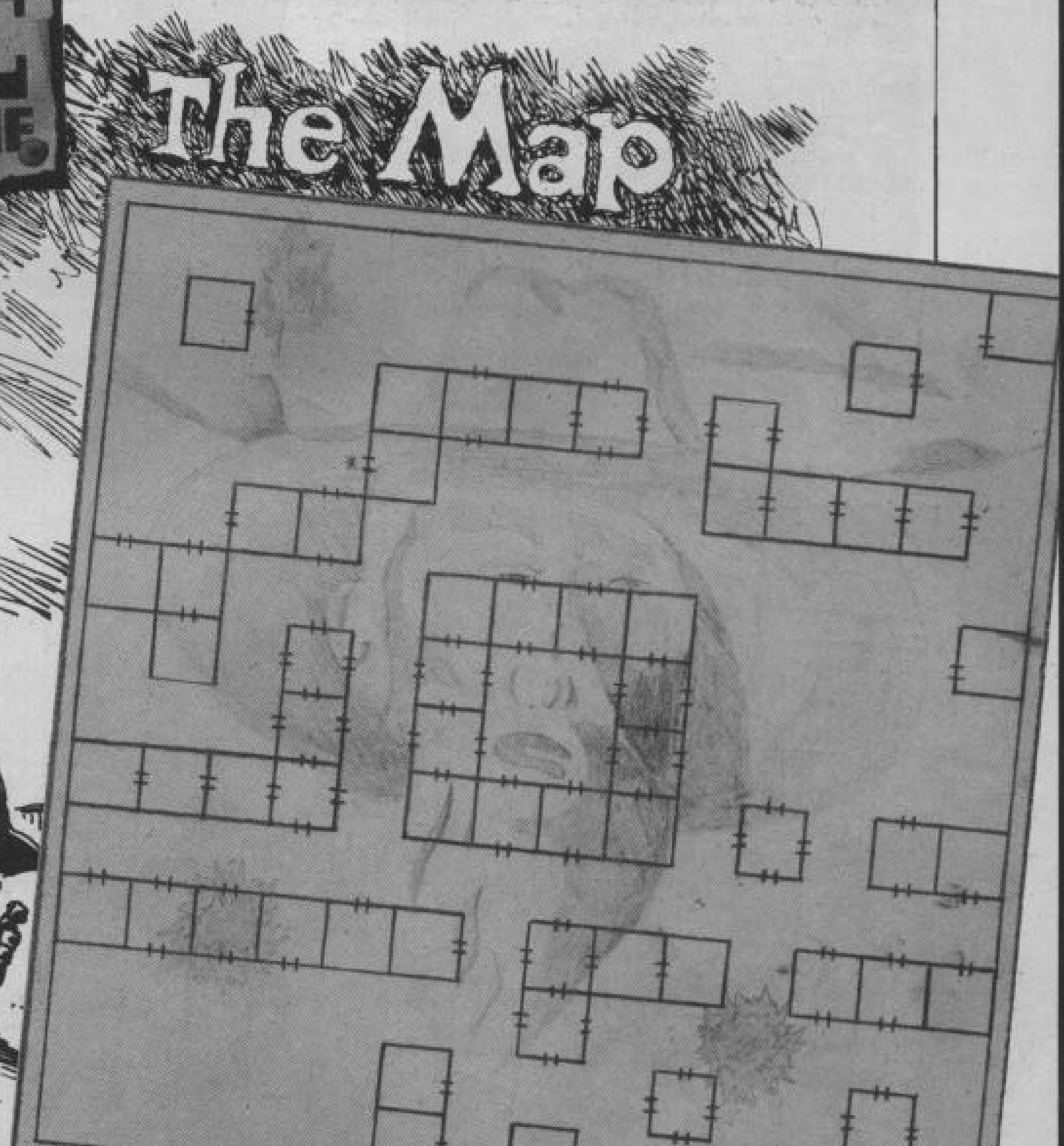
Stand outside the Head's office. As the Headmaster approaches you drop a stink bomb. As soon as you have dropped it run because you may be given lines. The Head will then open the window.

Once you have the bike loose (detailed a few issues back, leave the bike outside the girls' school) and the window open, the next task is to knock out Albert, the caretaker. At playtime go to the open window and wait until lessons start. Albert will close the gate to the girls' school and return to close the door of the boys' school. As he approaches, fire the catapult at the tree, a conker will fall down and, if you have timed it right, Albert will be knocked out and the door to the school will remain open. This does take a bit of practising.

With the window open, fire the water pistol at the plant pot, stand on the plant pot and you will be able to walk out of the school. Repeat the procedure at the gate to get over it. Once you are over the gate go to the girls' school and jump at the Sherry bottle. Miss Take will come after you, so drop the mouse to stop her. Get on the bike and ride towards the gate — when you are nearing it stand on the saddle. The bike will hit the gate and you will be knocked over into the boys' school ground. Fill the cups up with the Sherry and knock them one by one on to the Teachers' heads. Write the code you receive on a blackboard and go and fetch the frog from the store room.

Ride the bike back to the girls' school. Stand underneath the cup in the girls' school and jump up. The frog will now be on the shelf. When Miss Take is underneath the Frog, knock it on to her head. She will drop a key. Return to the boys' school. Follow Mr Wacker into his office and jump up at the safe to complete the game.





TRASHMAN

This listing originally appeared in issue 22 but there were a couple of slight mistakes so here is the correct version. Don't worry if no program names appear on screen.

```
1 REM TRASHMAN POKES
10 PRINT AT 9, 2; "PLAY TRASHMAN TAPE FROM THE START"
20 POKE 23570,16: LOAD ""SCREEN$: LOAD ""CODE
30 POKE 59615, 251: POKE 59616, 195: POKE 59617, 3: POKE
59618, 19
40 POKE 23570, 6
50 RANDOMIZE USR 42384
```

Once loading has finished the program will return to BASIC, now enter any of the following POKES.

POKE 42528, 0 for infinite attempts
POKE 42444, 0 if you run out of energy you progress to the next screen
POKE 42445, 0
POKE 42457, 0 if you are hit by a car or trash cart you go to the next screen
POKE 42458, 0
POKE 42459, 0
POKE 52060, 201 when the bonus reaches zero it loops around again to 9999
POKE 49022, 24 if you hit a car you only get a limp
POKE 49017, 201 so you can walk through any moving object without being affected by it.
POKE 48985, 201
When you have entered enough pokes then Randomize Usr 42384 to start the game.

GYRON

Oh dear! Something bad happened to this one so here it is again in its entirety. The program stops the towers from shooting.

```
1 REM GYRON POKES
5 CLS
10 RESTORE
20 LET TOT = 0
30 FOR I = 65400 TO 65488
40 READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A + A * PEEK (I-65400)
50 POKE I, A
60 NEXT I
70 IF TOT <> 1394160 THEN PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN
DATA!!!": BEEP 1, 0: STOP
80 PRINT AT 0, 0; "START ATRIUM OR NECROPOLIS TAPE"
90 RANDOMIZE USR 65400
100 PRINT AT 1, 1; "PLEASE WAIT, I HAVEN'T CRASHED"
110 RANDOMIZE USR 56328
1000 DATA 49, 255, 255, 1, 58
1001 DATA 0, 33, 182, 92, 205
1002 DATA 232, 25, 221, 33, 0
1003 DATA 0, 17, 17, 0, 175
1004 DATA 55, 205, 86, 5, 221
1005 DATA 33, 0, 64, 17, 80
1006 DATA 191, 62, 255, 55, 205
1007 DATA 86, 5, 33, 171, 255
1008 DATA 17, 136, 141, 1, 38
1009 DATA 0, 237, 176, 195, 0
1010 DATA 96, 1, 254, 247, 237
1011 DATA 120, 203, 71, 192, 237
1012 DATA 120, 203, 71, 40, 250
1013 DATA 46, 0, 237, 105, 17
1014 DATA 16, 39, 27, 122, 179
1015 DATA 32, 251, 44, 125, 230
1016 DATA 7, 111, 237, 120, 203
1017 DATA 79, 32, 235, 201
1018 DATA 184, 48, 240, 37, 32
1019 DATA 239, 6, 201, 205, 218
1020 DATA 219, 48, 230, 120, 254
1021 DATA 212, 48, 244, 205, 218
1022 DATA 219, 48, 220, 62, 195
1023 DATA 50, 241, 219, 221, 33
1024 DATA 221, 218, 17, 2, 0
1025 DATA 237, 95, 6, 18, 46
1026 DATA 1, 120, 6, 215, 205
1027 DATA 214, 219, 208, 62, 228
1028 DATA 184, 203, 21, 62, 22
1029 DATA 210, 68, 219, 58, 220
1030 DATA 218, 133, 50, 220, 218
1031 DATA 101, 58, 53, 221, 170
1032 DATA 171, 221, 172, 221, 173
1033 DATA 173, 221, 119, 0, 6
1034 DATA 10, 203, 99, 40, 13
1035 DATA 58, 53, 221, 198, 138
1036 DATA 131, 146, 50, 53, 221
1037 DATA 5, 5, 5, 58, 53
1038 DATA 221, 198, 103, 50, 53
1039 DATA 221, 221, 35, 27, 122
1040 DATA 179, 194, 65, 219, 195
1041 DATA 143, 219, 42, 221, 218
1042 DATA 17, 246, 3, 237, 82
1043 DATA 194, 201, 220, 33, 170
1044 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 221
1045 DATA 225, 17, 32, 0, 6
1046 DATA 2, 195, 65, 219, 209
1047 DATA 122, 179, 202, 188, 219
1048 DATA 213, 221, 225, 19, 17
1049 DATA 32, 0, 6, 4, 195
1050 DATA 65, 219, 124, 33, 203
1051 DATA 219, 34, 141, 219, 103
1052 DATA 203, 124, 6, 1, 195
1053 DATA 205, 219, 6, 6, 209
1054 DATA 122, 179, 200, 221, 225
1055 DATA 195, 65, 219, 205, 234
1056 DATA 219, 208, 195, 221, 219
1057 DATA 123, 230, 7, 195, 227
1058 DATA 219, 62, 0, 195, 232
1059 DATA 219, 62, 19, 61, 32
1060 DATA 253, 167, 4, 32, 3
1061 DATA 201, 201, 220, 219, 254
1062 DATA 31, 200, 169, 230, 32
1063 DATA 40, 241, 121, 47, 79
1064 DATA 62, 0, 246, 8, 211
1065 DATA 254, 55, 201, 1, 58
1066 DATA 0, 33, 182, 92, 205
1067 DATA 232, 25, 221, 33, 0
1068 DATA 0, 17, 93, 5, 62
1069 DATA 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
1070 DATA 48, 241, 62, 55, 50
1071 DATA 53, 221, 33, 63, 220
1072 DATA 17, 178, 220, 1, 25
1073 DATA 0, 237, 176, 175, 211
1074 DATA 254, 33, 244, 1, 118
1075 DATA 43, 124, 181, 32, 250
1076 DATA 195, 223, 218, 33, 0
1077 DATA 0, 34, 173, 254, 34
1078 DATA 174, 254, 34, 234, 254
1079 DATA 34, 236, 254, 34, 237
1080 DATA 254, 34, 192, 241, 34
1081 DATA 193, 241, 201
1090 DATA 17, 0, 27, 205, 86
1100 DATA 5, 205, 122, 91, 62
1110 DATA 255, 55, 221, 33, 0
1120 DATA 96, 17, 0, 136, 205
1130 DATA 86, 5, 205, 122, 91
1140 DATA 62, 255, 55, 221, 33
1150 DATA 128, 91, 17, 43, 0
1160 DATA 205, 86, 5, 33, 92
1170 DATA 91, 34, 169, 91, 195
1180 DATA 128, 91, 33, 128, 91
1190 DATA 17, 58, 0, 205, 19
1200 DATA 0, 62, 233, 50, 176
1210 DATA 92, 38, 99, 46, 52
1220 DATA 243, 34, 120, 92, 62
1230 DATA 201, 50, 232, 205, 195
1240 DATA 0, 94, 175, 55, 221
1250 DATA 33, 0, 0, 17, 17
1260 DATA 0, 205, 86, 5, 201
9999 STOP
```

XMAS SPECIAL CORRECTIONS

I suppose I got off quite lightly with the Christmas Special, the BULK of the routines did work. Anyway here are some of the corrections to the faulty routines. Next month I will be printing some of the routines I collected over the Christmas months so you'll just have to wait to find out what they are.

GYROSCOPE

Don't bother with the routine printed in the Xmas Special but just enter this program, choose the pokes you desire, run the program and then start the Gyroscope program from the start.

10 CLEAR 24063: LOAD "" SCREEN$: LOAD "" CODE: insert your pokes here but make sure you separate them with a colon: RANDOMIZE USR 52930
POKE 54354, 201 - so you can walk through nasties.
POKE 53922, 0 - for infinite lives.
POKE 54033, 201 — just try it out.

WHEELIE

The error was in line 20 where the C went missing but if you missed that issue here is the entire routine.

```
5 REM WHEELIE POKES
10 LET C = 0: FOR A = 23296 TO 23340: READ B: POKE A,B: LET
C = C + B: NEXT A
20 IF C <> 5024 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
30 RANDOMIZE USR 23300
40 DATA 175, 50, 21, 91, 49, 0, 0
50 DATA 221, 33, 111, 63, 17, 145, 27
60 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 48, 234
70 DATA 221, 33, 108, 98, 17, 125, 152
80 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 48, 242
90 DATA 62, 201, 50, 85, 117, 195, 30, 109
```

SPYHUNTER

If you have the original routine then you can correct it by inserting POKE N, A into line 50 just before the NEXT N.

```
5 REM SPY HUNTER POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 9, 1;"PLAY IN SPY
HUNTER MASTER TAPE";AT
11, 9;"FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 LET TOT = 0
50 FOR N = 65024 TO 65114:
READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A:
POKE N, A: NEXT N
60 IF TOT <> 9438 THEN PRINT
AT 0, 0; "ERROR IN DATA":
STOP
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65024
100 DATA 237, 091, 083, 092, 042
110 DATA 089, 092, 043, 205, 229
120 DATA 025, 221, 033, 128, 254
130 DATA 017, 017, 000, 175, 055
140 DATA 205, 086, 005, 042, 083
150 DATA 092, 237, 075, 139, 254
160 DATA 205, 085, 022, 042, 083
170 DATA 092, 237, 091, 143, 254
180 DATA 025, 034, 075, 092, 221
190 DATA 042, 083, 092, 237, 091
200 DATA 139, 254, 062, 255, 055
210 DATA 205, 086, 005, 042, 083
220 DATA 092, 017, 253, 003, 025
230 DATA 235, 033, 086, 254, 001
240 DATA 005, 000, 237, 176, 033
250 DATA 000, 000, 034, 066, 092
260 DATA 062, 001, 050, 068, 092
270 DATA 201, 120, 074, 108, 098
280 DATA 144
```

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DYNAMITE!



Ivan the Crusader's epic quest to end Rasputin's evil reign puts this isometric multi room arcade adventure in a world of its own.

The evil Orcs ravage the land of Belorn – you control the only characters who can save it. Stunning landscapes plus intriguing adventure in 'Venturescope'.



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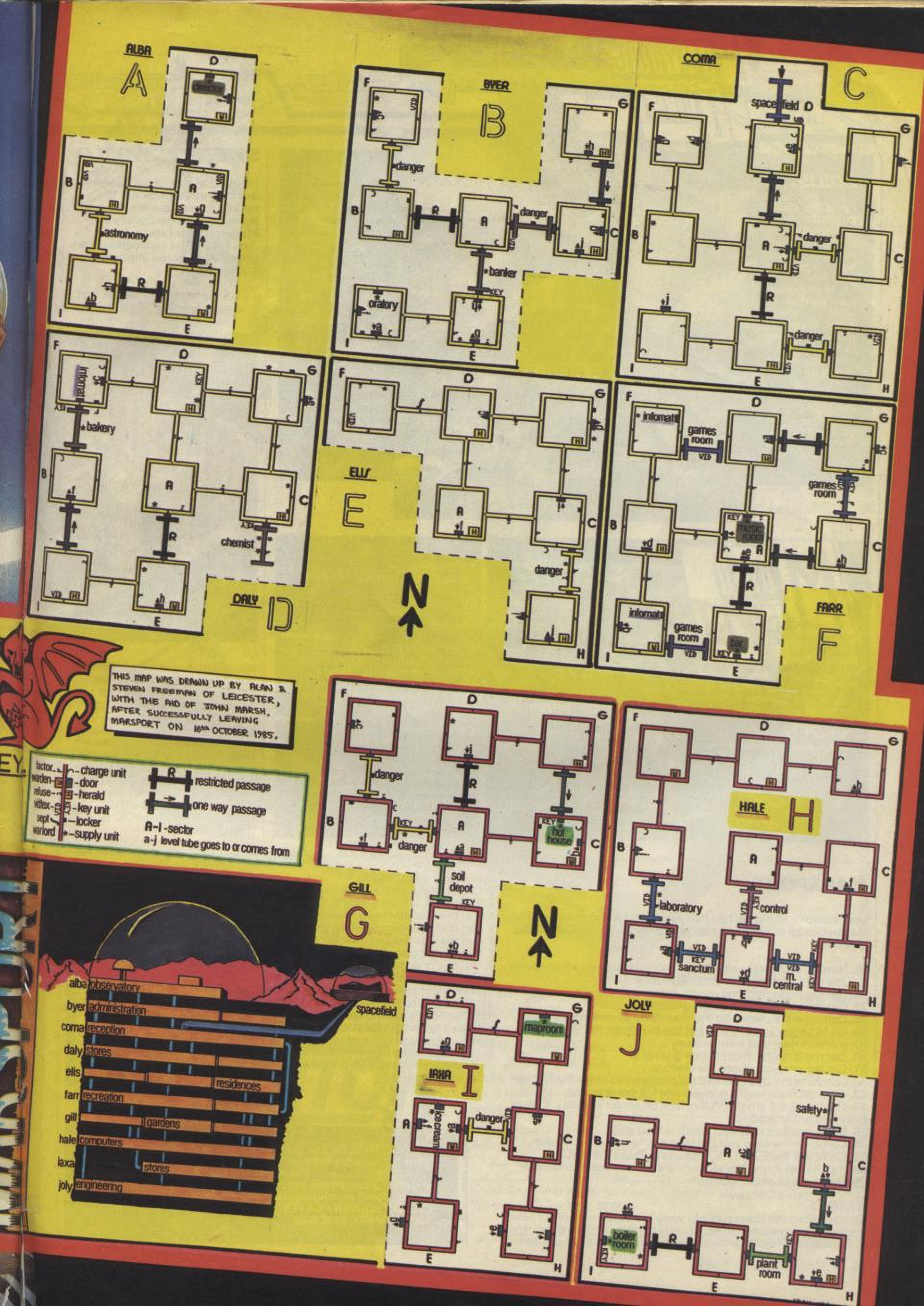
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Marsport
The Map
YOU ARE COMMANDER JOHN KEPLER MARSH – YOUR MISSION: LOCATE CENTRAL COMPUTER IN MARSPORT COMPLEX, GET FORCE FIELD PLANS AND ESCAPE...
NOTES: KILL WARDENS ON SIGHT!
HERALDS ALWAYS (?) HARMLESS
VIDEOTEX GIVES INFO + CLUES
KEY UNITS NEED CORRECT OBJECT TO ENTER DOOR,
FACTOR UNITS NEED 2 OR 3 ITEMS TO MAKE ANOTHER.
OLIVER FREY
MARSPORT


ALBA
A
director
astronomy
BYER
B
danger
danger
banker
KEY
oratory
COMA
C
spacefield
danger
danger
DALY
D
informat
bakery
chemist
ELIS
E
danger
N
FARR
F
infomat
games room
games room
music room
infomat
games room
bar
KEY
THIS MAP WAS DRAWN UP BY ALAN & STEVEN FREEMAN OF LEICESTER, WITH THE AID OF JOHN MARSH, AFTER SUCCESSFULLY LEAVING MARSPORT ON 16th OCTOBER 1985.
KEY
factor
warden
refuse
vittex
sept
warlord
-charge unit
-door
-herald
-key unit
-locker
-supply unit
restricted passage
one way passage
A-I -sector
a-j level tube goes to or comes from
GILL
G
danger
danger
hot house
soil depot
N
HALE
H
laboratory
control
sanctum
m. central
IAXA
I
ice cream
danger
maproom
JOLY
J
safety
boiler room
plant room
alba observatory
byer administration
coma reception
daly stores
elis residences
farr recreation
gill gardens
hale computers
laxa stores
joly engineering
spacefield

ZOIDS

I'm a bit disappointed with the amount of mail received on this game but nevertheless Neil Stone **of Huntingdon has written in with these hints. Come on gamesters go out and buy this one, you won't regret it!**

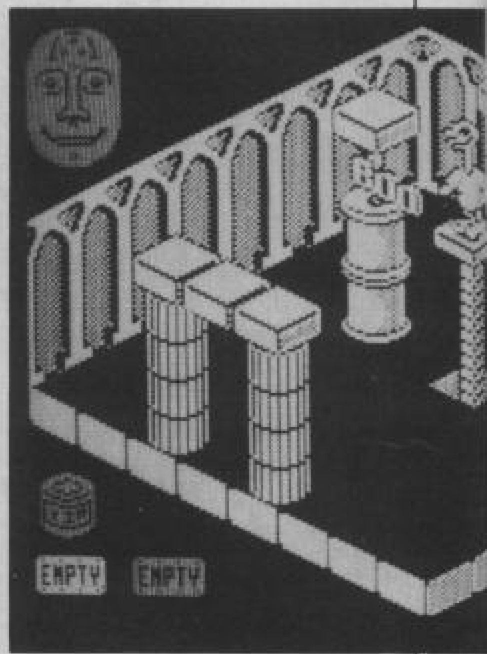


When approaching a city complex, radio base and tell them to blow up the Power station, wait outside the complex until the missile hits its target. Move into the complex and guide a short range missile towards the zoidar mine, this will ensure that no new zoids will appear to attack. While you are doing this it is also advisable to destroy the radio beacon otherwise you may find Redhorn the Terrible breathing down your sockets.

SWEEVO'S WORLD

I think that this game has been out long enough for me to reveal tips so here are the main points of Andrew Dadley**'s, of Kingston near Lewes, letter. Just follow the instructions and your game should improve quite a bit.**

To kill the horrible little girl first find a teddy bear. Then enter the



room with her in it and climb up some blocks so that you are safely above her. Once that has been done just drop the teddy on her head as she passes. To kill the dictator follow the same procedure but this time use a boot. To kill a Wijur just hound it into the rising finger. To kill a goose just get a weight to drop on its head but before that collect a BOO and walk up behind it. Then say BOO to a goose (groan).

MINI TIPS

After a few months' gap the Minitips section returns with all those odd snippets that can improve your gameplay.

ROLLER COASTER

From: **Kevin McKay** of Paisley
There is a small bug in the game. When the game starts go into the screen on the right and press the 3 key. Doing this you lose one life but the game slows down until you press 3 again.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE

From: **Christopher Mills** of Belfast
At the beginning of every screen keep the keys S and W pressed, your fighter will approach your opponent and beat him up. It works every time. The game also has a nasty tendency to crash when you score over 100,000.

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS

From: **Reeves** of Birmingham
I don't know what it is supposed to do but try it anyway. When you are going in one direction press the button to go in the opposite direction while keeping the key of the original direction depressed.

ROCKMAN

From: **Simon Taylor** of Hove
The four codes required to finish the game are: ONYX for level E, GURU for level I, SAGE for level M and CLAW for level Q.

MONTY ON THE RUN

From: **Jeff Smith** of Buntingford
The five items needed for the freedom kit are: the jetpac, passport, rope, gasmask and the telescope.

COMMANDO

From: **Andrew Watkins** of London
When you approach a gate stand on the far left and fire continuously to kill all the men that come pouring out from behind the gate.

MARSPORT

Last month's *Marsport* tips had some of the info missing after instruction 25 so here is the correction plus the final part of the solution.

25. Now go and get the clue from the Vidtex unit on sector f level e. 'One says nothing, the other says it all'.
26. Get the mute from the music room.
27. Get the manifesto from the oratory.
28. Combine the mute and the manifesto to make the E token.
29. Go to sector i level d and get the clue from the Vidtex unit. 'One draws near and throws away'.
30. Get the charcoal from sector g level d.
31. Get the projector from the oratory.
32. Combine the charcoal and the projector to make the N token.
33. Go west from sector g level i and kill the Warlord.
34. Get the clue from the Vidtex unit on sector d level i. 'One is easy and full of aplomb'.
35. Make another cake and another lead suit.
36. Combine the cake and the lead suit to make the R token.
37. Combine the E, N, T, R, Y tokens to make the key.
38. Put the key in the key slot in the sanctum sector e level h.
39. Go west out of the sanctum.

STAGE 3

Do not collect the plans straight away because you will not have enough time to escape if you do so but instead follow these tips.
1. Get the clue from the Vidtex on sector d level j. '7 from 10 makes you a bighead'.
2. Collect the E codex from sector i level j.
3. Get codex D from sector d level i.
4. Get the G codex from sector i level h.
5. Get codex B from sector g level g.
6. Get the T codex from sector e level f.
7. Get the U codex from sector f level e.
8. Get the W codex from sector e level d.
9. Get the I codex from sector h level c.
10. Get the H codex from sector g level b.
11. Get the N codex from sector l level a.
The 10 codes's are the ten referred to in the Vidtex clue but you will have to find out for yourselves what the 7 is. But if you work that out then you will end up with a map reference. Go to this area and go to the side view and shoot at the wall to reveal a lift up to the start of the game. You must have the plans to escape from Marsport.

That's all the room I've got this month but here is a teaser of what is appearing in these hallowed pages next month: *Popeye* tips, *Saboteur* pokes, *Rambo* tips, *Fourth Protocol* tips and maybe something extra special! If you have any tips, cheats, pokes or solutions then send them to: *ROBIN CANDY, CRASH PLAYING TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*

WIN A SEIKO RC-1000 WATCH!

Crash Competition



This amazing cross between a watch and a database could be yours!

We've had one of these incredibly cunning gadgets in the office for a week now, and it really is very cunning. The complete package includes everything, bar an Interface 1, that you need to connect your computer and watch together and get them talking. The manual that comes with it is very clearly written, taking you through the steps necessary for successfully feeding the watch with information in a very straightforward manner.

This ultimate product of the Gadget Age could be yours. Not for the usual £99-odd that you would have to hand over in the High Street, but totally free. Hattori UK — the people who distribute the watch in the UK, have said that we can give one away to a deserving CRASH reader.

Write and tell us why you deserve to receive an RC-1000 for nothing. We don't want begging letters. Oh No. That'd never do — there's quite enough creeping goes on at the top of ordinary letters to FORUM.

No, we want you to write and tell us what you'd use this Datagraph for if we gave it you. What useful snippets of information would you squirrel away inside its 80 pages of memory? How would using the watch change your life?

Best submission to SEIKO DATAGRAPH COMPETITION, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB. Make sure your ideas reach the Minion's post box by the 27th March, and you could soon be amazing your friends with your stunning new watch.

Be careful though — if you win, your Spectrum might get jealous!

Seiko have produced the first wrist computer terminal — the RC-1000. It's a digital watch with a difference. It can do much more than tell you time of day. Forget those simple beeping digital watches that include chronographs, lap timers (whatever the average human being uses **them** for), and stopwatches. Just like they say in the advertisements, nowadays "you can take a little bit of your computer with you wherever you go".



Well, a little bit of your computer's memory. Oh alright then, a little bit of the contents of your computer's memory. You see this watch can be used as a portable mini-database, storing up to 2K of information on eighty 'pages'.

The watch face itself contains a 12 by 2 alphanumeric display (letters and numbers, dolt!) on which the time, day, date and year appear when it's pretending to be an ordinary watch. But the RC-1000 has hidden depths: it is really a Datagraph, a cross between a chronograph and a database.

You can prepare information to store in the memory of the watch on your computer using the editing software that comes with the package. If you've got a Spectrum and an Interface 1, then all you do is link the watch up to the computer with its special lead and download your data.

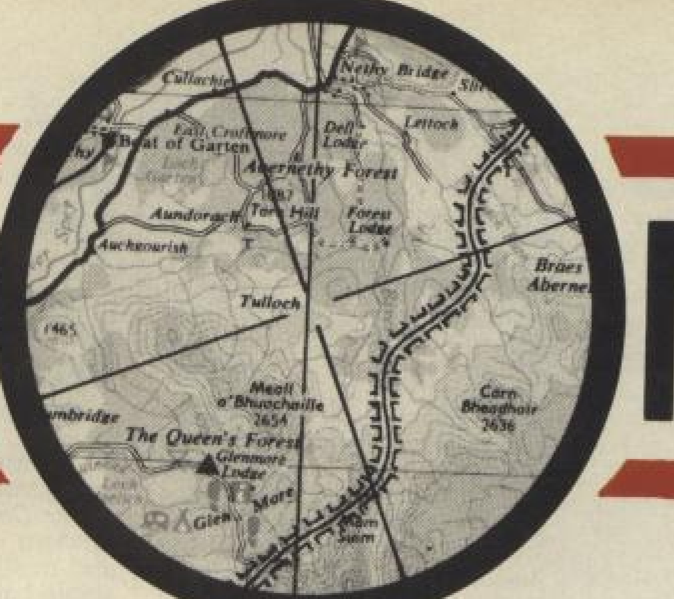
Each of the eighty 'pages' of memory in the watch can be used as a menu screen, which heads up a number of other pages of memory and leads into them. So if you set up one page as the Address Menu, then you have up to 79 pages remaining in which to store the details of your friends' addresses. Accessing the the Address Menu with one of the little buttons on the face of the watch, you can then step through the actual address screens until you come across the information you want.

But there's more. If you want to set an alarm signal to remind you to do something it can be linked to the memory pages. So when the watch goes beep at half past nine in the morning of September 23rd 1986 it doesn't just go beep and leave it at that. It shows you the relevant page, which reminds you what to do at 9.30 am, 23/9/86. Smart? Yes, definitely, especially as you can program reminder alarms up to a year in advance.

More still: If you have to do something every Sunday at 8.00 — perhaps get ready to watch the next episode of CRASH-NASTY on telly, then you can get the watch to beep and show you the appropriate reminder page at 8.00 every Sunday until you tell it to stop.

International jet setters who can never remember what the time is right now There, where they're going, while they're still Here, getting ready to go, will be amazed by the way you can program up to 79 different world times into this little beast. Sort out the sums, load up the watch from your computer and you need never be stuck for an answer when you're in London and someone asks what the time is. In Rio.

And if you are always forgetting vital bits of information, you can write yourself memos — perhaps just the phone number of your doctor or a reminder to wash behind the ears. It's up to you.

FRNTLINE

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The two games reviewed this issue posed quite a problem. Both are very good. Both were written by people who obviously care very much for the hobby of wargaming. One was written as a straight board-to-computer conversion (if such a thing is possible). The other tries to take advantage of the computer's inherent visual qualities in terms of presentation — not to make it gimmicky, but simply to experiment with a new approach to wargame interaction. So I had to get my priorities in order.

Wargaming as a hobby has been suffering for some time. Many people say this is because the hobby appears inflexible to outsiders. Is producing a computer wargame that acts like a board wargame giving people what they want, or is it just preaching to the converted (for want of better terminology)? On the other hand, are new approaches to wargaming just fads which however pretty, are unlikely to attract new people to the hobby? Indeed, do they deter wary afficionados of the genre, despite the qualities such games may boast?

Or am I missing the point? Is computer wargaming becoming a new hobby in its own right? Could be, could be . . .

THEIR FINEST HOUR

Producer: Century Communications
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Authors: **Nicholas Palmer & John Wilson**

In the wake of PSS's highly acclaimed *Battle of Britain*, Century Communications, better known for their series of computer handbooks, have published an icon driven simulation of this famous conflict. The game was programmed *Fourth Protocol* style by John Wilson, but designed by veteran board wargamer, Nicholas Palmer, author of the definitive *The Comprehensive Guide to Board Wargaming*. The result is the most fascinating computer wargame yet to appear on the Spectrum.

It's hard, in fact, to know exactly where to start praising the game as it excels in so many areas. The packaging is medium format 'bookcase' style, containing a cassette and instruction leaflet. 'Leaflet' really fails to do justice to the excellent rules slip. From a potted history of events that led up to the battle, you are taken systematically through the different rules and given guidelines on play at each stage. Diagramatic summaries of the icons used in the game make the straightforward play techniques even easier to grasp for the beginner. Finally, a section of notes from Nicholas Palmer explains the philosophy of game design used.

On the other side of this 'leaflet' is a map of the southeast of the UK and part of occupied France. The map shows airbases, anti-aircraft installations, radar stations and ports, as well as major cities the Luftwaffe might attack. This supplements

Intelligence reports are vital if an accurate assessment of enemy dispositions is to be made . . .



Different stages of combat readiness allow interceptor forces to be prepared with the utmost efficiency. Use the pointing finger to select between options



FRONTLINE

the map presented on the screen during play.

The game has a pulse rate feature used to set the speed of the game. The rate can be varied between 1 and 255, meaning the game can be finely tuned to individual taste: it can be set up to suit a wide range of tastes from those of the player who likes to analyse a game in fine detail as if it were a solitaire board game to the player who wishes to test personal reactions and ability to make fast crucial decisions. The clock can be paused for necessary breaks in play when the game doesn't need to be saved, or temporarily speeded up during certain times of relative inactivity. Once the pulse rate has been set it remains the same for the greater part of play.

As with its obvious competitor, *Battle of Britain*, *Their Finest Hour* allows the player to select single day or campaign scenarios. The single day option is perhaps the best start point for the beginner. Once the instructions and nature of play have been thoroughly digested, the player can progress to the full campaign and decide how best to set the pace of the battle. In the one day scenario, victory is assessed at nightfall when the attacks have ceased. In the campaign game, at the end of each day's fighting you are summoned to Winston Churchill's command bunker where he assesses your progress. It is possible (though very difficult) to deal a crippling blow to the Luftwaffe during a single day, in which case victory will be yours. If you have managed the forces particularly badly, Churchill asks for your resignation. Otherwise, he merely assesses your progress so far, and play continues the next day. You may decide to quit at any point during the campaign game, and victory is given to whichever side has performed best.

Intelligence reports are crucial for planning the initial defence. The type and number of aircraft available to the enemy are detailed at the start of the game, and although the numbers may differ each time the game is played, subsequent RAF losses are always measured against this first intelligence report. The Luftwaffe has ME109 fighters, ME110 fighter bombers, HE111 and JU88 heavy bombers and the medium DO17 and JU87 bombers at its disposal. British air defence is made up entirely of squadrons of Spitfires and Hurricanes. The author acknowledges that Beauforts, Defiants and the like also had a small part to play, but for the purposes of the game he chooses to ignore them. This has no detrimental effect on the game as a simulation.

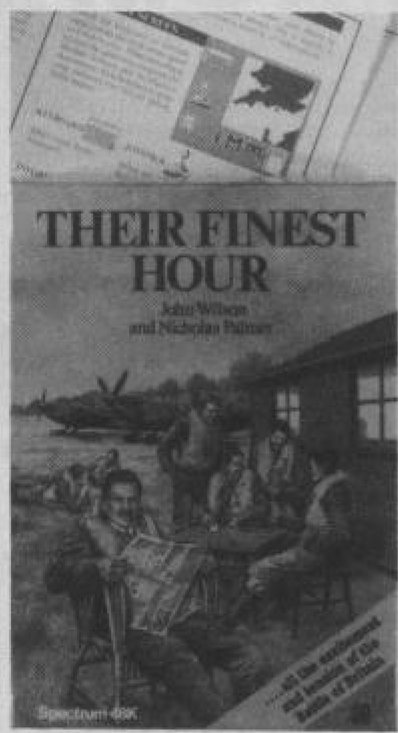
Whilst monitoring incoming enemy attacks the player has the option of setting the level of flak, and can order different levels of alert for pilots. Alerts can be made locally or set to bring an entire region's interceptor force into action. Seriously fatigued pilots may be sent to Scotland for rest while new pilots are brought in. More experienced pilots are worth treating as well as possible under the circumstances, as they have the greatest effect on the enemy when in battle. Repairs may be carried out on those airfields which have suffered an enemy attack. If these repairs are intensive, they return an airfield to operative status quickly, but during the day that repairs are being carried out the field is vulnerable to attack.

When a German airborne unit is successfully intercepted, the player is asked to supply an aggression factor. Minimal aggression causes the RAF pilots to break off the attack before casualties are suffered, whereas a high aggression factor results in relatively high losses on both sides. If an enemy squadron consists entirely of fighter aircraft, it's best to save your pilots and break off the attack. If it's mainly a bomber formation, then the opportunity to damage it as severely as possible should be taken. Germans gain victory points with successful raids on ports and cities. Successful Luftwaffe strikes against radar bases eventually result in severe blind spots occurring in the defensive network, which can lead to your downfall.

Forces may also be moved to respond to differing strategies from the Germans. On some occasions, the Luftwaffe might make sporadic, small attacks on varying targets; alternatively they may try to smash your opposition in one fell swoop. The variety of strategies that may be employed by the computer make this one of the most compelling games I've ever come across. Having now played the game several times, I have not yet been able to anticipate more than the simplest of actions on the enemy's part.

The way in which the icons are used is very neat. All the possible actions are clearly set out before you. Pressing the wrong key doesn't always lead to a major mistake — you can usually get out of it without any particular problem. Sometimes a message appears such as, 'Already in flight, Sir!' if you try to scramble an airborne unit. Full combat results appear in messages which list the numbers of each type of aircraft lost by each side in a particular engagement.

The game lacks the optional arcade element present in *Battle of Britain* and is inferior in one or two aesthetic points (such as the way the radar screen could be scanned in the PSS game) but instead the player has a brilliantly implemented simulation which does full justice to the historic events it represents. The talents of John Wilson and Nicholas Palmer have been used to the greatest effect. To my mind, the combination of their abilities has resulted in the finest wargame currently available to Spectrum owners.



PRESENTATION 88%
Beautifully effective — and useful too!

RULES 94%
Excellently devised and explained

PLAYABILITY 92%
Icon driven commands take very little getting used to

GRAPHICS 94%
More in the way they are used than in technical complexity, they are excellent. Even the loading screen has an amazingly executed picture of Winston Churchill

AUTHENTICITY 96%
Once a good pulse rate is set and the campaign game is played, the qualities of the game as a simulation really stand out

VALUE FOR MONEY 95%
Compared to others of this ilk, very well priced

OVERALL 96%
Sheer brilliance

DESERT RATS

Producer: CCS
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **R T Smith**

RT Smith won acclaim for his last game, *Arnhem*. His latest work, *Desert Rats*, outclasses *Arnhem* in terms of both scale and quality. *Arnhem* depicts a single battle, massive though it was in terms of the men and equipment deployed by both sides. Now Mr Smith has returned with a truly massive game covering the history of the North African campaign in a series of scenarios which range from a seven turn introductory game based on the British Battleaxe offensive to a six hundred and twenty four turn game depicting the conflict from Rommel's arrival in the Spring of 1941 up to his departure at the end of 1942.

There are no skill levels as such, but the matter of game complexity is dealt with in an innovative way related to the status of Malta. There are three different ways Malta's importance can be portrayed. The first is the historical setting, where Malta is used successfully by the British to increase their own supplies and cut off those of the enemy. The second, Operation Herkules, assumes that the Axis forces capture Malta and as a result their supply levels increase greatly during the latter half of 1942. The third option does not allow the British to use Malta — or assumes that Axis suppression was severe enough to negate the advantages offered by Malta —thus constantly increasing supplies reach the Axis forces.

The game can be played by one or two players, and in the one player game the computer can play either side. As usual, the excellent rules book is crammed with historical notes as if the author is urging you to test the validity of his game. Indeed, the booklet often provides an insight to good strategy and is worth reading even by those familiar with the historical context as a whole, because the information it contains is so relevant to the scenarios presented.

The sequence of play allows the British player to order his forces first, with the Axis player following. Movement and subsequent combat are handled simultaneously once both sides have issued their instructions and play proceeds to the next turn. As usual, reports are always available and the same variety of combat and movement modes as those found in *Arnhem* are employed successfully here.

Apart from the standard move/fight options available to a unit, the British player has the option to GO TO PORT at the rate of one unit per turn. The order



allows British units to travel from Tobruk to Alexandria, or vice-versa, as long as Tobruk remains held by British forces.

Units are mainly in the form of brigades, battalions and HQs. Italian units are only depicted as divisions. Unit symbols are clearly marked for easy identification and each side has different representative colours. For those using monochrome monitors, Axis and Allied forces have opposite facing units and British units are also shown in outline.

The screen consists of four areas. The largest of these shows the map of the region over which the battles were fought. A small window in the upper right hand corner of the screen shows the date and time (the game is not 'real-time' however). Below this is a dual purpose window displaying order options and messages and finally, at the base of the screen, the identity of the unit currently being ordered is displayed.

Stacking rules are also employed, allowing balanced groups of units to make concentrated moves upon the enemy. Incidentally, as losses are inflicted on units, they may actually change their designation and become parts of other units — but such things are handled in a fairly straightforward manner so as not to burden players with too much irrelevant detail.

Logistics play an important part in the game. Various kinds of movement and attack orders deplete the supplies of units to varying degrees. The supply rules in this game are the most complex I've dealt with for some time. Unless attention is paid to the depletion of units' supplies, you will soon find yourself up a proverbial gum tree!

Although the game plays in a similar fashion to *Arnhem*, it is reassuring to see that the author has decided not to rest on the laurels of his previous creation and has modified the rules system so the actual battle sequences play faster and yet more confusingly to add realism. The effect works well and enhances the feeling of tension prevalent throughout the game.

There are six scenarios in all. The first five are in chronological order whereas the last one attempts to cover the entire campaign. To be honest, there was no way that this last scenario could be played in time for the review schedule but from playing the others, I can only say that it looks very tempting indeed. To play the campaign to its conclusion would undoubtedly require several sessions at the computer. To master this game would probably require even more time. The only way to win the scenario is to destroy all the opposing units. At the same time, your own losses must be kept low. This is the only major point of contention I have with the game. As the author himself points out in the historical notes, the Axis powers withdrew before they suffered total annihilation and even then, inflicted massive losses on the Allies during the campaign. The other scenarios however, each have their own victory conditions and all of these reflect the difficulty of the actual situations.

One other area, not so much an inaccuracy as an omission, is the lack of airpower on either side. This can be accounted for, however, when you consider that rarely did the RAF or Luftwaffe have any decisive affect on engagements, and as the author himself reminds us in the designer's notes, there were some limitations imposed by the lack of memory — an incredible amount is packed into the game.

But this does lead me to the final point. Whilst the game excels in some areas, I feel that Mr Smith may have bitten off more than a Spectrum can chew. It may seem unfair to say this as the author is evidently a most capable programmer and a dedicated military historian. But the designer's notes are full of excuses for the things he couldn't put in — all because of the limitations of the computer rather than his limitations as a programmer. Perhaps a modular series of games would have worked better. Air support rules could have been added for the sake of completeness. The scale could have been one that better suited the game and Mr Smith's apparent wishes. Then the Spectrum would have had a classic series of wargames, I'm sure.

What *Desert Rats* does offer is a massive game that strives to retain every historical point of accuracy despite limitations and ever present compromises. Perhaps these criticisms should be laid at the producers and not the author himself. Perhaps other factors prevented a series of games from being developed. Whatever the reasons, *Desert Rats* is a superb game that could have been even more substantial.





PRESENTATION 89%
Clearly laid out but a little cramped on the screen

RULES 97%
Well developed and written

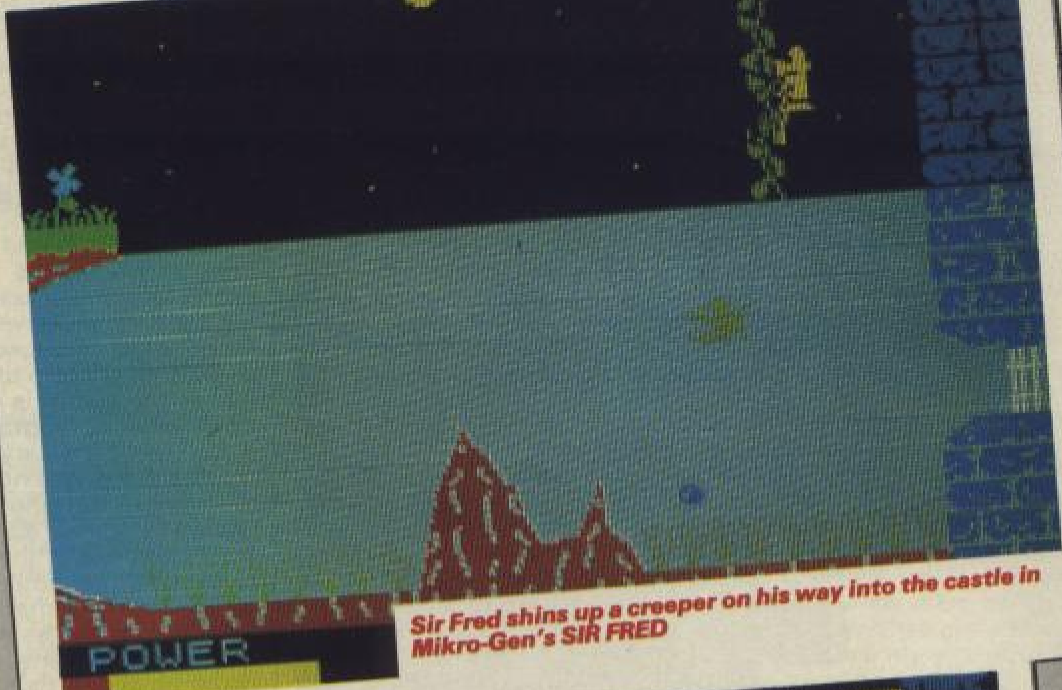
PLAYABILITY 85%
Unwieldy for the total beginner but otherwise there should be no problems

GRAPHICS 60%
Let down the game a little through the ambiguity of some terrain features on the screen

AUTHENTICITY 90%
In his attempt to cover the entire campaign in one game, the author may have missed the importance of other factors. Accepting Mr Smith's priorities however, the level of accuracy is very high.

VALUE FOR MONEY 87%
Nothing innovative here — but a superb application of the conventional wargaming concept nonetheless

OVERALL 88%
Massive in scope, but begs the question of the importance of originality and clarity of presentation. Will appeal to 'hard core' wargamers looking for a new challenge.



Sir Fred shins up a creeper on his way into the castle in Mikro-Gen's SIR FRED



At the top of the creeper, the valiant Sir Fred perches on a ledge. Lightning zaps through the sky and your hero has to leap onto the middle cloud — that's where he can use a lever to open a secret trapdoor which leads into the castle

S*ir Fred* is a fairy tale about brave knights and damsels in distress. So to start in the way of all good fairy tales: Once upon a time there was a wise old king who ruled over a happy land. Except for one thing, the evil Hugh D'Unwyt, an evil dude who's stolen away the King's fair daughter. Since the kingdom is usually such a happy place, the bored Knights are all off on a quest for the fabled gold lame string vest. A hero is needed and the only knighted personage left in the kingdom brave (or stupid) enough to take up the quest is the aged and corpulent *Sir Fred*.

The princess is holed up in the Castle Feare, stronghold of D'Unwyt. When the Baron stole away the King's daughter he knew that trouble would be on its way, so his castle is extremely well guarded and near impregnable to a lonesome Knight. Undaunted by his daunting task, Sir Fred decides to try and battle his way to win the hand of his fair lady.

The way to rescue the princess and become a hero is to collect and shrewdly use certain objects. Unlike a majority of arcade adventures objects are placed in a different place each time you play. Though mapping the game is still quite easy, placing the objects isn't. Though not random there are fifty six different permutations of the where the different items essential to your quest will appear.

Sir Fred himself is an action-packed spritette capable of many actions and looking remarkably similar to something out of a Mordillo cartoon. When you start, all Sir Fred can do is run and jump. His running style is quite a bit more realistic than most and has actual inertia. Holding down left or right doesn't boot *Sir Fred* straight into top gear — instead, he gradually speeds up to top whack. Change direction, and the Knight's heels stick into the ground and little sparks fly off as he reaches zero speed. You can run into problems (literally). If you run *Sir*

CRITICISM

"This is an excellent arcade adventure with lovely graphics. The main character is fab, and looks like he's been lifted straight from a Mordillo cartoon. The animation on him is incredible for such a tiny character as he swims, swings and runs through the castle and its lands. The game is a tricky one, and there are some pretty nifty puzzles to be solved before the Princess falls into your arms. This game really appealed to me, who cares about an ancient storyline when a game is as good fun as this?"

CRITICISM

"Dear Oh Dear! How many times have we had the "rescue the beautiful princess from the wicked knight" story before? I must admit, though, that the inlay is very well set out, with a very poetic poem to set the scene. The game is similar to JSW, but has superior graphics. The man, Fred, jumps, swims, runs and walks in liquid animation, and is capable of making bigger jumps if he takes a run-up. If you run one way, and then change direction, little skid marks appear at his heels. There are better platform games on the market, but this one is nice enough. It may appeal more to younger girls — with all this talk of fairytale knights and princesses . . . "



Producer: Mikro-Gen
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Made in Spain**

S·I·R F·R·E·D

Fred at full tilt down a flight of stairs, for instance, he's more than likely to end up flying head over heels down them.

Objects are picked up with the select key. Along the bottom of the screen are a number of boxes that can contain an object. A blue box highlights the window currently under your control. To use an object press the use key and the blue boxed item will come into use. On some of the weapons only a limited period of use is permitted, so a little countdown appears above the window and decrements every time the object gets used. If the counter gets to zero then the object is no longer in *Sir Fred's* inventory.

Different objects can add to *Sir Fred's* abilities. Pick a sword, and the knight is capable of being a swashbuckling swordsman if you add some neat control effort. One of the weaker weapons is the the stone that can be thrown — another good one is the bow and arrow.

What makes *Sir Fred* different to most of the Miner Willy's and Wally Week's of this world is his ability to interact with the background. There are pools that he can swim in, ropes to be climbed and cliffs to jumped off, all easily accomplished with up, down, left, right and fire. Action packed Fred, invulnerable he isn't. Running on a limited energy supply, *Sir Fred* has to try and avoid bumping into various nasties and making silly mistakes. All these silly activities are damaging to Fred's energy band, shown at the bottom of the screen. Only one energy band is supplied and if it reaches zero then the game's over. Nasties you'll encounter are of a fairly common sort: things like snakes, fish and rats, all moving along preset patterns.

The puzzles and tasks to be accomplished are of a fairly complex sort. Just like any arcade adventure nowadays *Sir Fred's* world is shown in flick screens, with lots of medieval-type backgrounds in this case. The more of the castle you visit, the better your end percentage. Near a hundred percent is needed to rescue the princess and what a daunting task that is.

CRITICISM

"This is an interesting departure from the Wally series. It is still an animated adventure with lots of objects to collect and many locations to use them in. The screens are well designed and very colourful, with the usual Mikro-Gen attention to detail. The character of Sir Fred is smoothly animated as he runs, swims and climbs. The only problem with playing this game is the controls. Though only six controls are needed there are great troubles with getting your jumps right and it takes lots of practise to use the ropes without falling off. I enjoyed playing this game and would recommend it to anybody who enjoys the Wally games and would like to try a slightly more advanced game."

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston and Cursor
Keyboard play: very fast and responsive
Use of colour: some attribute clash but otherwise tasteful
Graphics: pretty backdrops that are very detailed plus a very action packed sprite
Sound: no tune but nice spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 36
General rating: A great platform adventure that's quite novel

Use of computer 83%
Graphics 92%
Playability 90%
Getting started 86%
Addictive qualities 91%
Value for money 89%
Overall 91%

RAMBO



Producer: **Ocean**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Platinum Productions**

With the wide publicity given to 'Rambo', few people can have failed to hear of the all-fighting, invincible character brought to the screen by Sylvester Stallone. Ocean, catching on to the Rambo bandwagon, have now released their binary interpretation of Stallone's blockbuster. The plot of the game follows that of the film quite closely.

John Rambo is a veteran of the Vietnamese war; a jungle fighter drafted back into service to perform a reconnaissance mission to a Prisoner of War camp. His instructions are to gain entry, take some photos and get out without either engaging the enemy or being noticed. If Rambo is spotted, it would jeopardise the prisoners' chances of rescue and could lead to their deaths.

In the film, our hero begins his adventure by skulking into the camp and manages to stick to his orders until he spots his old war comrade, Banks, tied to a bamboo cross. Unable to leave his old pal dying in the sun, Rambo disobeys his orders and rescues his friend. The enemy, of course, spot this, and much blood splashing, carnage and mayhem is the result. Swiftly, Rambo returns to the helicopter that airdropped him, and makes the pilot fly back to the camp for a quick and successful attempt at rescuing the prisoners.

Then, pausing briefly to tackle an enemy gunship that tries to blast them out of the sky, Rambo and the rescued prisoners fly to Thailand. Well that's the theory and, if you complete the game, that's what should happen.

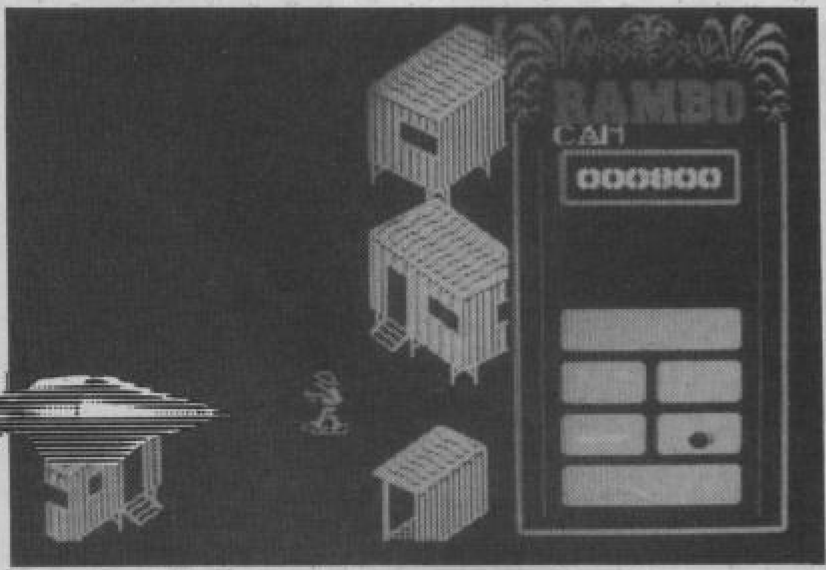
Rambo is a Platinum Productions game and is front-ended with their familiar options screen. Keys can be defined, although S starts the game, and skill levels can be set. The playing area occupies the left two thirds of the screen, with the right hand portion occupied by a combined inventory and status area.

The jungle scenery scrolls around our hero in the action screen. The viewpoint from which the game is played is above and behind the hero, creating a pseudo 3D effect. Rambo can move around in the eight normal joystick directions but may come to halt when he reaches the edge of the jungle.

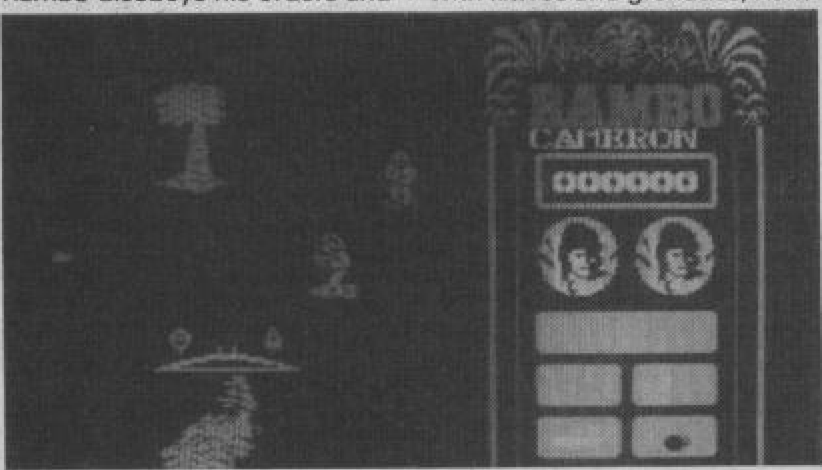
Rambo is not the only person in the jungle — it's full of enemy soldiers sneaking about. This is a combat game, so Rambo's inventory keeps a track of his 'kills' as well as displaying the weapons he collects. Starting off with knives and grenades, Rambo can collect other weapons on the way. Apart from the knives and grenades, you may find other weapons lying about on the jungle floor including a bow and explosive arrows, a machine gun and a rocket launcher. All the weapons have a seemingly endless supply of ammo, but only one weapon may be used at a time.

Grenades are quite deadly but the noise does tend to attract the baddies to your location, whereas the knives are silent. If you throw a knife in the direction that Rambo is facing, any bad guy it travels over is killed and your score increases by ten points. If, on the other hand, a baddie should shoot or stroll through you, you don't survive the encounter. All the same, the man is tough: you get four lives.

Rambo starts his mission outside the enemy camp and must get inside via a small entrance on the right hand fence, rescue Banks by running over him and then run to the helicopter which is due north. The helicopter then needs to be flown to the large **H** landing pad in the jungle from where the hostages can be liberated using the rocket launcher. On the trip home, with the helicopter filled with the good guys, a gunship attacks. The view is similar to the jungle and camp scenes, but a helicopter replaces Rambo in the playing area.



In amongst the huts RAMBO deals death to everything that moves



RAMBO Cameron. Our Photography Minion is obviously making a break for stardom . . .

CRITICISM

● " **After** Commando **comes** Rambo, **which is similar in many ways. As I got into the swing of things, shooting and blowing things up while dodging bushes etc, I found it was a reasonable game. The graphics on the loading screen and in the game itself are really good and detailed but a bit dull when in comes to the colour section. When you die in the game you get a realistic rendition of the US National Anthem. Not bad, overall. "**

● *" And so, in a blaze of exploding grenades and bazookas, John Rambo hits the Speccy (I hope it didn't hurt . . .) in the officially licenced game-of-the-film from Ocean. I haven't managed to see 'Rambo', the movie yet, but from comments handed down in school, the game doesn't match it. In look, it is very similar to* Commando, *but it's not as playable. Some neat tunes express themselves well, and there's a small high score table. Overall, this is quite a good game, and I'd recommend it to anyone who likes trying to totally obliterate any enemy when the odds are a mega-million to one. Well, a thousand anyway . . . Hmm. Maybe ten . . .*

● " Not as good as *Commando*, but a very good film tie-in for the price — and it has something to do with the film, which makes a change! The screen area is a bit too small for a good shoot em up, which is what *Rambo* really is, and tends to scroll from side to side constantly which gets very annoying. Rambo runs around in a very *Commando*-like style, with trees and bushes all drawn in detail. (I found I could blow some of them up with the exploding arrows and hand grenades). It is odd the way our hero is always carrying a machine gun — even when he hasn't picked it up, and it would be a good touch if Rambo actually carried weapons on-screen when he picks them up. There are some good touches — like the way you use a knife to free your fellow soldiers and the use of a helicopter to rescue others. I wouldn't advise you to buy *Rambo* as well as *Commando*, but instead of it. It adds an extra dimension to the arcade game while retaining a number of similarities. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: status screen pretty, playing area rather drab
Graphics: good scrolling and detail
Sound: very good tune, reasonable effects
Skill levels: 3
Screens: 3
General rating: doesn't quite match the hype perhaps, but offers some good arcade playing.

Use of computer	82%
Graphics	81%
Playability	80%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**79%**

FOOTBALL QUICK QUIZ



Producer: Rothmans/ Cassel
Retail price: **£8.95**
Author: **Peter Dunk**

As you can imagine, *Rothmans Football Quick Quiz* is a football quiz program. It boasts 1,000 questions on all aspects of football — FA Cup, League Cup, personalities, trivia — in fact it tests just about every avenue of football knowledge.

Up to four people or teams can be quizzed together, and at the start a list of eighteen footballing subjects is displayed. Once a choice has been made, the appropriate section of the program loads and then information on the number of players and their names needs to be input.

The computer acts as quizmaster and can present questions in three ways: Assigned; Three In A Row and The Race. Alternatively, the Full Quiz option is a mixture of the three styles of quiz. 'Assigned' is the most basic of the three options. The computer asks each player in turn a question and gives four different answers numbered 1 to 4. Using the appropriate number key, the player chooses an answer — a correct response is rewarded with a little fanfare and ten points are added to the player's score. If the computer is given a wrong answer, it points out the mistake and reveals the correct response to that question. Players are given a twenty second time limit to answer their questions — take too long and the computer assumes you don't know and gives the answer. After a certain number of questions the player who has scored the most points is proclaimed the winner. If there is a tie then, a tie-breaker question is asked.

In 'Three In A Row' the gameplay is the same, except a bonus of twenty points is given if a player answers three questions in a row correctly. 'The Race' has everybody scrabbling for the keyboard. When the Race option is chosen the computer asks everyone to define a 'claim' key for themselves before the game starts. The computer puts questions onto screen with a twenty second time limit. The first player to press his 'claim' key is given four seconds to answer the question. The correct answer wins ten points, but a wrong answer results in ten points being removed from the claimant's score!

CRITICISM

● **" As my football knowledge is limited to Hereford United, this program doesn't appeal to me at all. Sound and graphics are not "over-used", although there are a few tunes here and there (possibly to wake you up). The loading screen is really something else — I haven't seen anything as bad as this for ages. The unfortunate footballer depicted looks like he's been in a fatal accident and they've sewn his limbs back in the wrong places. In fact, when I first saw it I thought it was an anaemic lollipop standing on a giant beach ball! On the whole, I can't see four intelligent people playing this game for longer than ten minutes without falling asleep. But then, if you're a football fan, you might just see it a little differently . . . "**

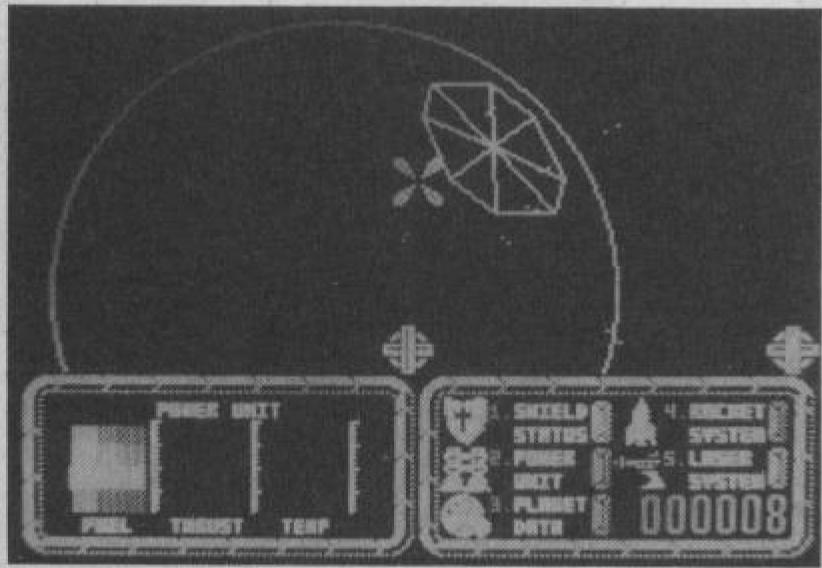
● *" Despite being a total non-footballer, I found this game quite interesting — but will it have a wide appeal range? Unfortunately, the quiz didn't hold my attention for too long. To me, the twenty odd different subjects didn't seem particularly different! The game itself is extremely simply presented and is basic down to a point of dullness — there are no graphics and the sound consists of a few doleful poopoopbeedoops. The program is terribly overpriced — you could buy the Football Yearbook instead, and still have change. If the price was knocked down, it would be a touch more appealing but as it stands it may only to appeal to a few ardent soccer fans, and 'may only' are the operative words. "*

● " I quite look forward to seeing football-related computer games. Now I've changed my mind. *Rothmans Football Quiz* is a very simple, non-frilly question-and-answer game. Each set of questions has to be loaded from tape — even if the part you want is in memory! The contest is very simple and would probably be ideal for a very young person. The program is obviously written in BASIC and consists of some very stupid errors routines - like if you press the **BREAK** key you have to wait a few seconds for it to tell you that you pressed **BREAK**, then you have to load the whole section again. *Rothmans Football Quiz* is a very un-userfriendly program without any good features and not even a redesigned character set. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1-4 to choose answer, Z, M, Q, P to claim question
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: unresponsive
Use of colour: not inspiring
Graphics: just a dire loading screen
Sound: minimal
Skill levels: one
Screens: four different quiz options
General rating: a very poor question and answer game which probably won't even appeal to soccer fans at the price

Use of computer	23%
Graphics	N/A%
Playability	34%
Getting started	51%
Addictive qualities	26%
Value for money	14%
Overall	**21%**



BATTLE OF THE PLANETS

Producer: Mikro-Gen
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Chris Hinsley**

Arch rebel Zoltar's quest for galactic domination has caused him to attack a universe containing five planetary systems. A group of young superhumans pit their craft, Phoenix, against Zoltar's Spectran forces. Only the **G-Force** and their ship Phoenix can prevent Zoltar from destroying all life in the universe under attack.

You control Phoenix. Chasing and destroying enemy ships in space, you also have to fight it out on the surface of planets when Spectran landing craft start eliminating citizens. Once on a civilised world it's possible to refuel, repair and re—equip Phoenix by docking with fuel and repair ships. Zoltar's forces only land when your ship is in the same space—time as them, so the amount of mayhem they cause is limited to some extent!

The Phoenix is equipped with two weapon systems: laser cannons and neutron torpedos. The laser cannons tend to overheat and stop working if they are used continuously, and there's a finite quantity of energy in the laser cells. Phoenix begins with ten torpedos and fully charged laser cells, and must refuel and repair when armaments run low.

Warpgates allow travel between planet systems — find one, drive into it and a map of the universe pulls into view. The five systems are numbered, and a quick tap on the appropriate number key warps the Phoenix to your destination.

Status information can be called up into a window at the bottom left of the display, where information on your main power unit, shields, torpedo stocks, laser system and the neighbouring planet can be called up. Learning to flick through the displays is important if you are to monitor the state of play during the mission.

The main area of the screen acts as a cockpit view over which a long range scanner system is imposed. A three dimensional view of space as seen from the ship's bridge employs vector graphics to display planets and enemy craft, with stars moving towards you at a rate governed by your ship's velocity. Two sights are provided: the square neutron torpedo sight remains static in the centre of the screen, while a mobile sight is used to target lasers and steer the ship. Icons representing enemy craft, warp gates and planets are overlayed onto the cockpit view — covering an icon with the mobile sight allows you to drive towards the object it represents. The icon disappears when the corresponding ship, gate or planet appears on the main viewscreen.

Some of the enemy craft can be despatched with a few laser hits while others need a couple of torpedos to reduce them to scrap. When you're close to an aggressor your shields take a hammering — a hit on an unshielded section of the hull spells instant death.



While you are in the vicinity of a planet, a request for Planet Data reveals the number of enemy landers that are on the surface and the status of the population. If your ship is in the area when a planet's population is eliminated, you die too, so looking after the citizens is more than a noble aim.

To land on a planet, simply head straight for it, and you arrive on autopilot. The view of a planet's surface is presented with a line-drawn horizon that scrolls left and right as you move. Lines parallel to the the horizon move towards you to indicate forward motion and speed. The landers are squat, tank like machines which shoot at you while you shoot at them. Fuel and repair ships are represented by spanner and fuel-can icons until you get close, when they become revolving geometric shapes. To dock with a maintenance ship, just drive into it.

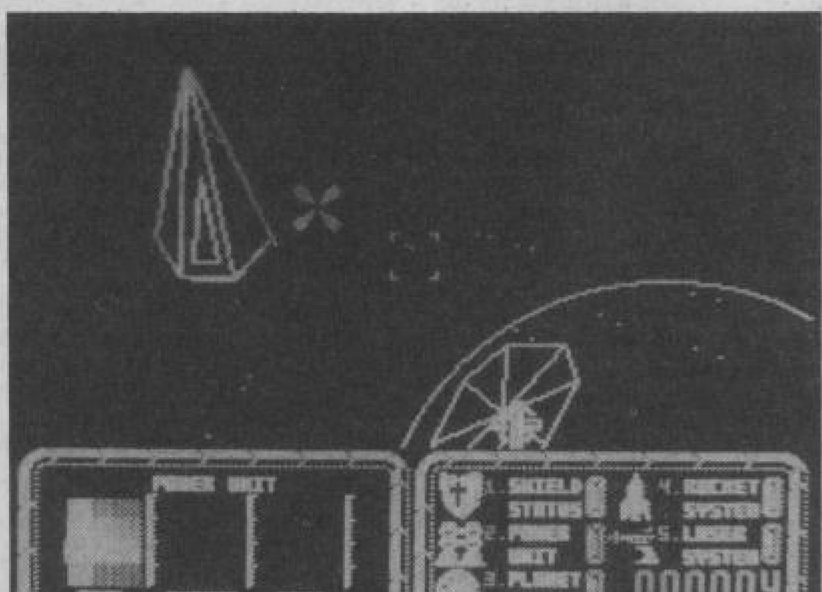
You've only go one life to play with in space, so drive carefully!

CRITICISM

● "'I was an avid fan of the BOTP series, and I think I'm going to be a fan of the computer game. I'm glad the game doesn't use the ill-fated Mikro Plus, because the higher price would surely have devastated its chances of success. The game is similar to *Elite* and *Starion* graphically, but doesn't seem to have the scope of either of those. It's good if you want a blast 'em up with minimal intelligence required, and the game is good fun in a general sense, though I wouldn't recommend you rush out and get a copy right now. "**

● " Battle of the Planets *is a sort of* Elite *without all the hard work of thinking and planning out your strategy. The presentation of the game is very slick and it contains lots of colour without the clashes. The game is nothing like the T.V. series and gets quite boring after a while because it is so easy to stay alive. The long range scanner is thoughtfully arranged and very useful because it is 'on screen' all the time which makes locating Zoltar and his chums quite easy. Both sequences (planet and space) tend to lock up when lots of things appear on the screen, meaning a constant speed is hard to maintain. I thought that the planet sequence was a bit too like* 3D Tank Duel *— not a very good copy at that. Given the simplicity of the game, I feel it's a bit overpriced.* "

● " I started getting a bit fed up with this game as I read the 'operating manual' while it loaded. The instructions are unclear and potter into gibberish every so often. The on-screen instructions were difficult to read and only give 'Z' as the torpedo fire key. Z—V works fine! Then it was out into space to do battle. Somehow, I just couldn't get the hang of controlling the game with the keys, and firing the torpedos accurately while steering the ship with a joystick had me beaten. The action can get a bit frantic at times, with all the controls that you need to fiddle with — it wouldn't be so bad if the Phoenix had a crew, but you're on a solo mission . . . still, it's not a bad shoot em up. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P, U/I left/right, Q—T up, A—G down, B—SPACE fire, 1—5 select scanner, K/J increase/decrease speed, Z—V fire torpedo
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: responsive, but can get tricky
Use of colour: colourful display windows
Graphics: fairly speedy wire frame 3D
Sound: opening tune, then firing noises
Skill levels: one
Screens: five planet systems to defend
General rating: Not a bad shoot em up quest

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	75%
Playability	69%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	68%
Overall	71%



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ENIGMA FORCE

Producer: Beyond
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Denton Designs**

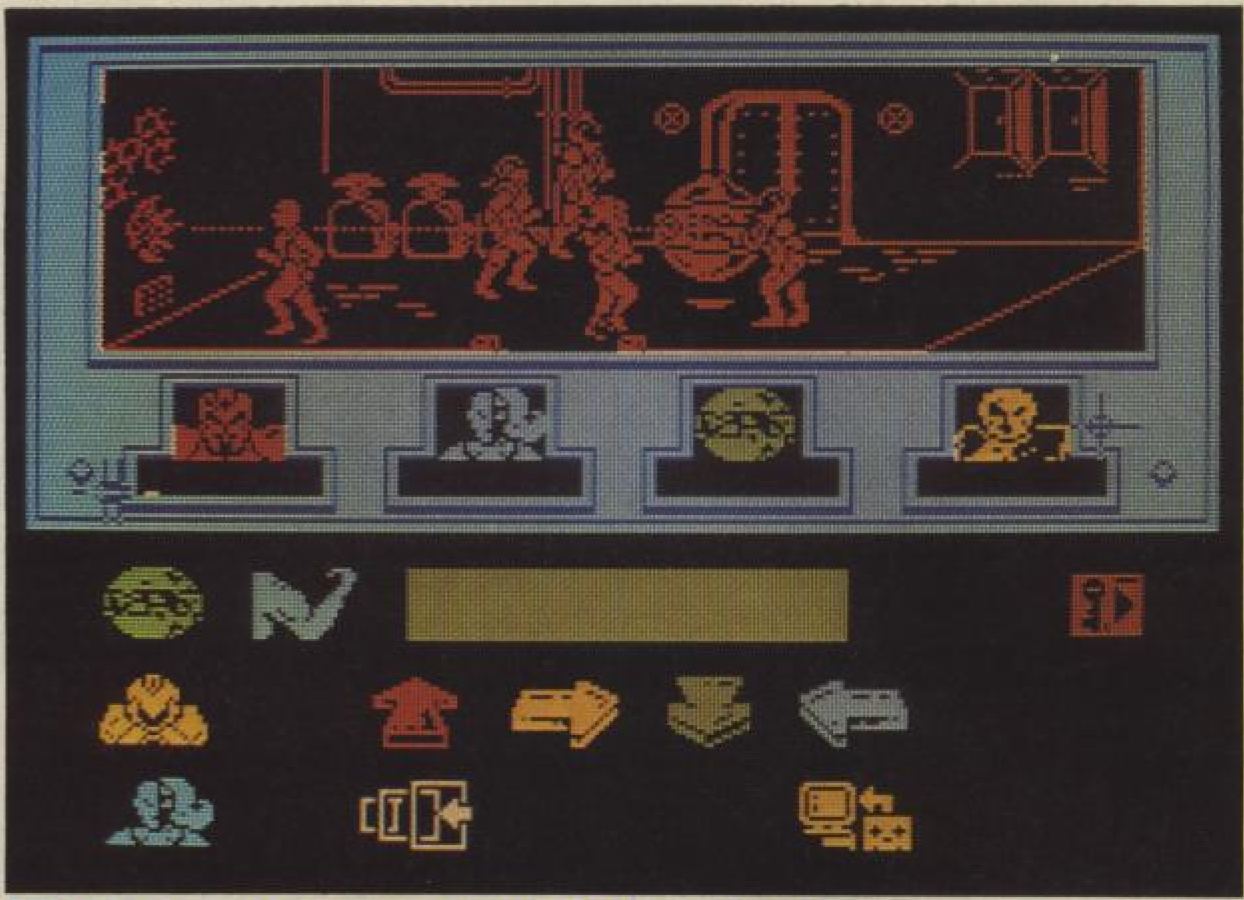
It's been a while coming but finally, the long awaited sequel to Beyond's famous *Shadowfire* is here. Having captured him at the end of the previous game, the Enigmateam is transporting wicked General Zoff across space in the Enigmacraft to face the Emperor's music. As the ship passes a nearby planet on the Imperial border, Zoff concentrates his psionic powers on the ship's guidance system causing it to crash. When the crew gain consciousness, Zoff has disappeared.

The planet is Syylk's homeworld and at the moment, its insectoid inhabitants are fighting a war with reptiloid troops loyal to the evil Zoff. These nasty creatures also have some ships on the way which, at some indeterminable time, will annihilate the planet. Controlling the Enigmateam — Zark Montor, Sevrina Maris, Syylk and Maul (the observant will have noticed that Manto has been written out of the script) — you have to locate the leader of the insectoids, make him your ally, find the only space worthy vessel in the reptiloid area and recapture Zoff as he tries to reach it. Simple.

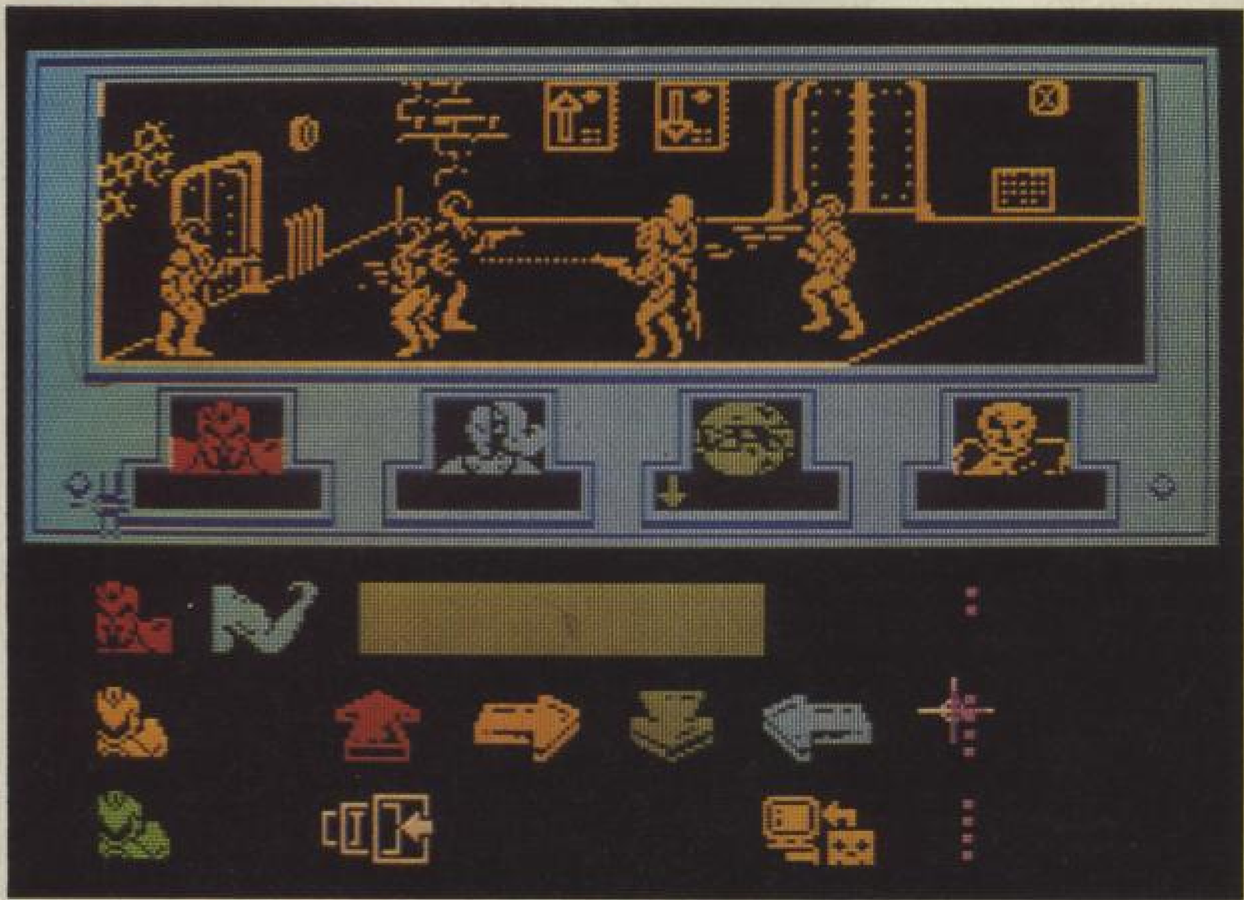
Well, not quite. Commands have to be issued to the team and enemy troops have to be dealt with — all in the available time limit! Zark Montor is the team leader (and main character). Syylk is the second in command — a heavily armoured and incredibly fit fighter with a pathological hatred of Zoff. Sevrina Maris is the markswoman and locksmith of the team. Finally, Maul the robot, adds slow moving but heavy firepower.

Unlike its predecessor, there is an action display area at the top of the screen. This shows the interior of the underground complex into which the Enigmacraft has crashed, depicting not only the team but also the various allies and enemies in an isometric perspective. Like *Shadowfire*, there is a series of icons by which the characters are controlled in the lower half of the screen. The control procedure usually consists of selecting a character, and then selecting a command icon for that character. Up to five different commands may be 'stacked' for each character at any time. Miniature versions of the relevant icons are shown beneath the character's icon when this happens. Possible actions include four directional movement, picking up or dropping objects, and two different types of combat. A character's status can also be checked from the icon table along with other game 'utilities' such as making a character reload a weapon, activating an object (usually explosives), quitting, pausing and the like. When a character is to reload a weapon, you must first select a magazine of ammunition from the **objects carried** area. Only the existence of ballistic ammunition is made clear but other types exist within the complex. There are some object icons about which the manual says little except that you should discover their uses for yourself. One of these is a red fish . . . It would appear that some may be useless.

A particular character may be selected to be put directly under



The playing area colour alters to indicate which character is under control — in this case Zark Montor (red). Most of the characters are in one location here.



Syylk (yellow) is under control, shooting an enemy in the back.

the player's control with the **mindprobe** icon. In this mode, the character may be moved about using either keyboard or joystick control. Actions are limited to movement and combat when this option is selected but it allows rapid deployment of the character which may be necessary.

The screen uses single colour graphics on a black background. The colour shown depends on the character under icon control. Sound effects support the actions of sliding doors, firing of weapons etc, and there is also an introductory theme tune.

Your mission awaits . . .

CRITICISM

● "Controlling the characters takes some getting used to and this inevitably means the first few games are likely to be unsuccessful. Once you get used to the controls, the pace is fast and the adrenalin is soon flowing. Somehow, I still feel that the icons are a little gimmicky and unwieldy but this will probably not deter those already addicted to *Shadowfire*. An attractive feature is that the game is playable in its own right so it really doesn't matter whether or not you bought the prequel. The opening theme is really well constructed and the redefined character set used throughout the game is an effective finishing touch. I think the game would play best with a joystick. Otherwise it's useful to have thirty fingers."



● "I can honestly say that I didn't like the thought of reviewing this game, as I didn't get on with *Shadowfire* at all — there were too many different pages of icons and I found it a bit of a struggle inputting instructions quickly enough. There are no problems of that type in this game, however. After a few goes, getting used to inputting commands and practising fighting, this game began to grow on me. I've been playing it solidly for the last few hours and I can't see myself putting it away for a couple of hours more, at least. Graphically, it is far superior to its parent; the 3D works very well and the characters are detailed and move around the screen very well. Sound is also pretty good, with a tune at the beginning and a few well placed effects during the game. Generally, I'd recommend *Enigma Force* to everyone as it is very addictive and immediately playable."

● *"Shadowfire was an enormous step forward for icon driven games and now Denton Designs have launched the sequel, which proves to be a worthy successor.* Enigma Force *is best summarised as a combination of* Shadowfire *and their other hit game* Frankie. *Getting into the arcade/adventure is no problem at all and within a short while using the icons becomes second nature. Should you dislike using the icons then you can play the game by controlling the character of your choice with a joystick. My main reservation about* Enigma Force *is that it may prove to be a bit easy. It doesn't take very long before you start doing quite well. On the whole this is a good game, much more arcade orientated than* Shadowfire, *that should appeal to fans of Denton's other games."*

COMMENTS

Control keys: ENTER COMMAND (Top Row); UP (Second Row); Down (Third Row); LEFT/RIGHT (Bottom Row Alternate Keys)
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, Sinclair and Fuller.
Keyboard play: Very fast.
Use of colour: Well used on the icons, more simplistic on the game screen.
Graphics: Very good use of graphic effects but character identity can become confusing if several are on the screen at the same time.
Sound: Good theme and special effects.
Skill levels: one
General rating: Difficult at first but rewarding, may prove quicker to solve than you think at first.

Use of computer	88%
Graphics	87%
Playability	92%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	86%
Value for money	87%
Overall	88%

ARC OF YESOD

Producer: Thor
Retail price: **£8.95**
Author: **The Thor team**

After the runaway success of *Nodes of Yesod* a sequel has finally arrived from the Liverpudlian demi-gods (Thor/Odin) in the from of *Arc of Yesod*. Once more the star of the show is the Rt Hon Charlemagne 'Charlie' Fortheringham—Grunes, the man who battled bravely against the black slab Monolith in *Nodes*. Though he battled bravely Charlie lost the contest, and the Monolith teleported offworld to escape destruction. Luckily the ionic destruction caused by the Monolith's hasty departure allowed it to be traced to its place of origin: Ariat, a strange alien planet.

Earth is still in danger — if the people of Ariat manage to download the information gathered by the Monolith, they will no doubt take advantage of the detailed knowledge it contains and attack Earth itself. They are believed to have constructed a massive battle cruiser capable of taking out most of the Galaxy. A shuttle, hurriedly prepared, transports Charlie to Ariat. Once again Charlie has been charged with saving life as we know it — his job is disarm and destroy the Monolith before the Ariatans can retrieve the information it contains.

Paradropping onto Ariatan soil, Charlie finds himself skulking on the outskirts of the city where the Monlith is held. He needs to find some way of reaching the device . . . . the game begins.

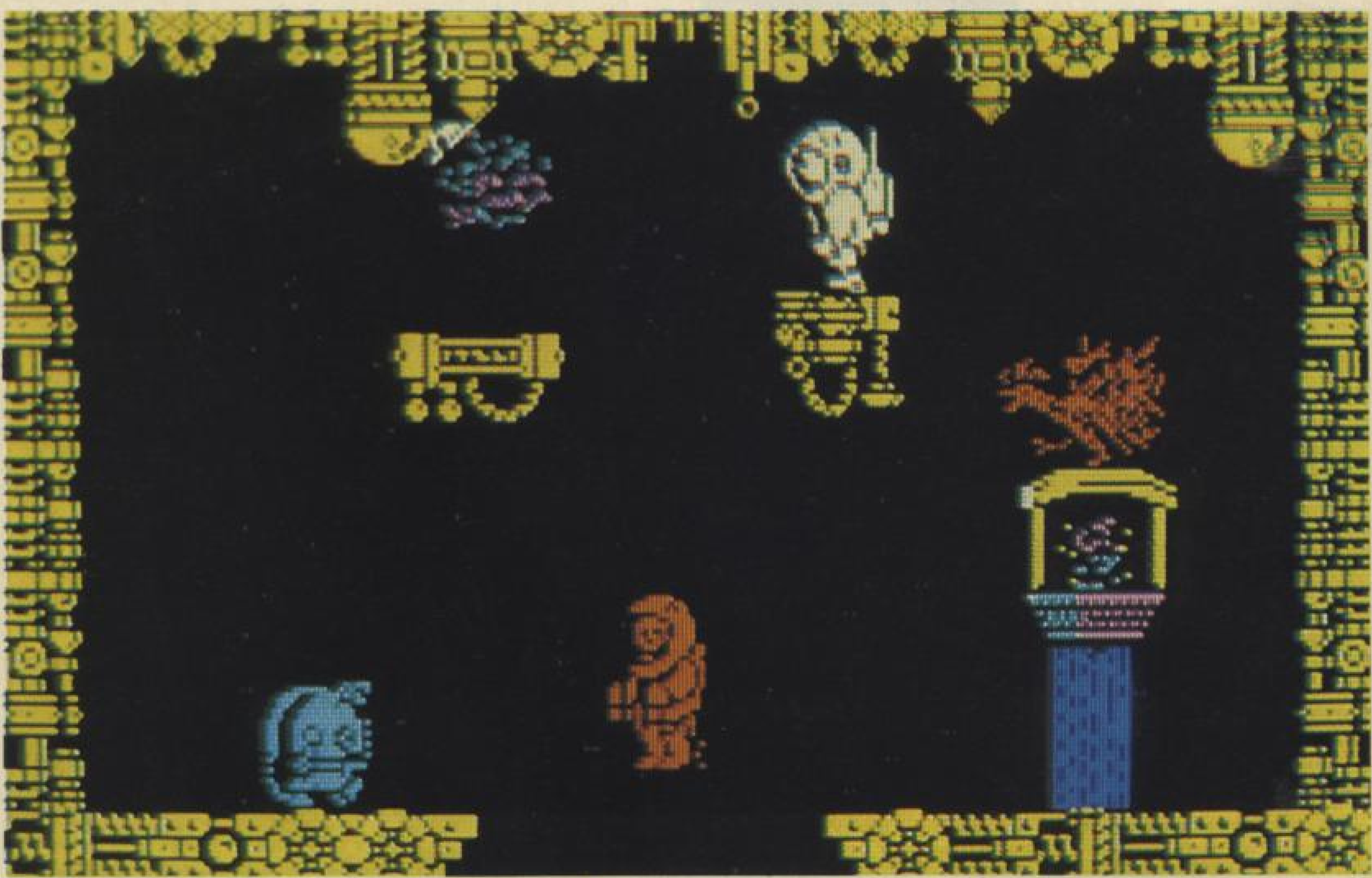


The adventure begins: Charlie stumps around in front of the alien cityscape. It's no use procrastinating (LMLWD) Charlie, get down there . . .

Charlie's best line of attack is to get underground and travel to the Security Centre via the large network of caverns and caves that nestle below the city. The surface view of Ariat shows the city in the background set against the night sky. As Charlie moves off the left or right of a screen, a new screen flicks into view. Small manholes are dotted around the city, and Charlie must use them to gain access to the subterranian world in which most of the action takes place.

Charlie is an agile fellow, who can leap and bound quite deftly in the low gravity environment of Ariat. 'Jump' sends our hero skyward into a forward somersault spin, to land firmly on his feet. In conjunction with the left and right keys, this is Charlie's main method of transport — useful when moving around the ledge filled caverns of Ariat. With a few well-timed sproings and cavorts it's possible to negotiate most of the contsructions and obstructions found underground. A teleporter system exists within the labyrinth, and Charlie can zoom between locations by stepping into one of the strategically placed teleport units.

Apart from static obstacles, there are mobile nasties that take some dodging. A whole range of strange and weird beasties can be found in the caves, and some nasties float in the atmosphere, while others trog about on the floor. The floor-trogging species of baddie tends to be pretty indestructable. If Charlie walks into one of them he's bounced all over the cave interior. Airfloaters disintegrate when touched but, like the ground animals, contact with one costs Charlie some of his essential life energy. He's got four lives, each if which is lost after too much energy has been sapped encounters with aliens. A little sine wave pulsing up and down next to the life counter shows how much of the current life's energy remains, and the readout becomes smaller with each clash with the flora and fauna. ▶



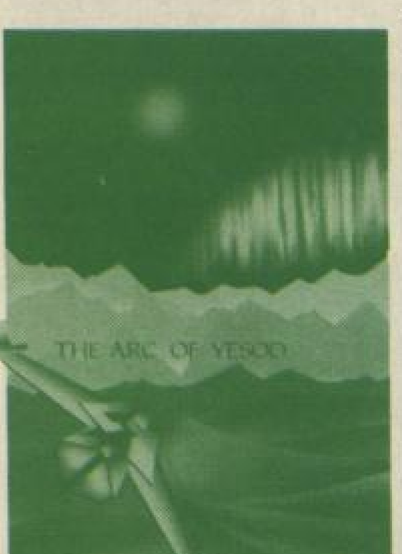
Inside a cave full of animated nasties. Watch out, Charlie, time's dragging on and there are crystals to collect.

A Sphere, or Electronic Mole, fights on Charlie's side. The Sphere is released from Charlie's backpack and can be controlled left, right, up and down. While the Sphere is under your control, Charlie remains immobile. This gadget is a worthy ally, capable of despatching the nasties by bashing into them. It can also open the secret passages that lie behind some walls by bumping into the masonry which conceals them. Charlie's armoury contains Smart Bombs that wipe out most of the baddies in the current cave on detonation.

Charlie needs to gather up eight crystals before he can have a go at dealing with the Monolith — the poor chap's certainly got his work cut out . . .

CRITICISM

● **'There really isn't a lot of difference between** Nodes **and** Arc. **The changes are few and far between — most notable is the enhancement on the graphics: the animated figures are larger and more detailed and the quality of the actual animation is a great deal better than in** Nodes. **Arc is quite a jolly game, nevertheless, interesting to play and**



enjoyable to map. Most arcade adventurers will surely enjoy this challenge. Even so, owners of Nodes **might well feel a little cheated if they shell out ten quid for a game that, in effect, they already own.'**

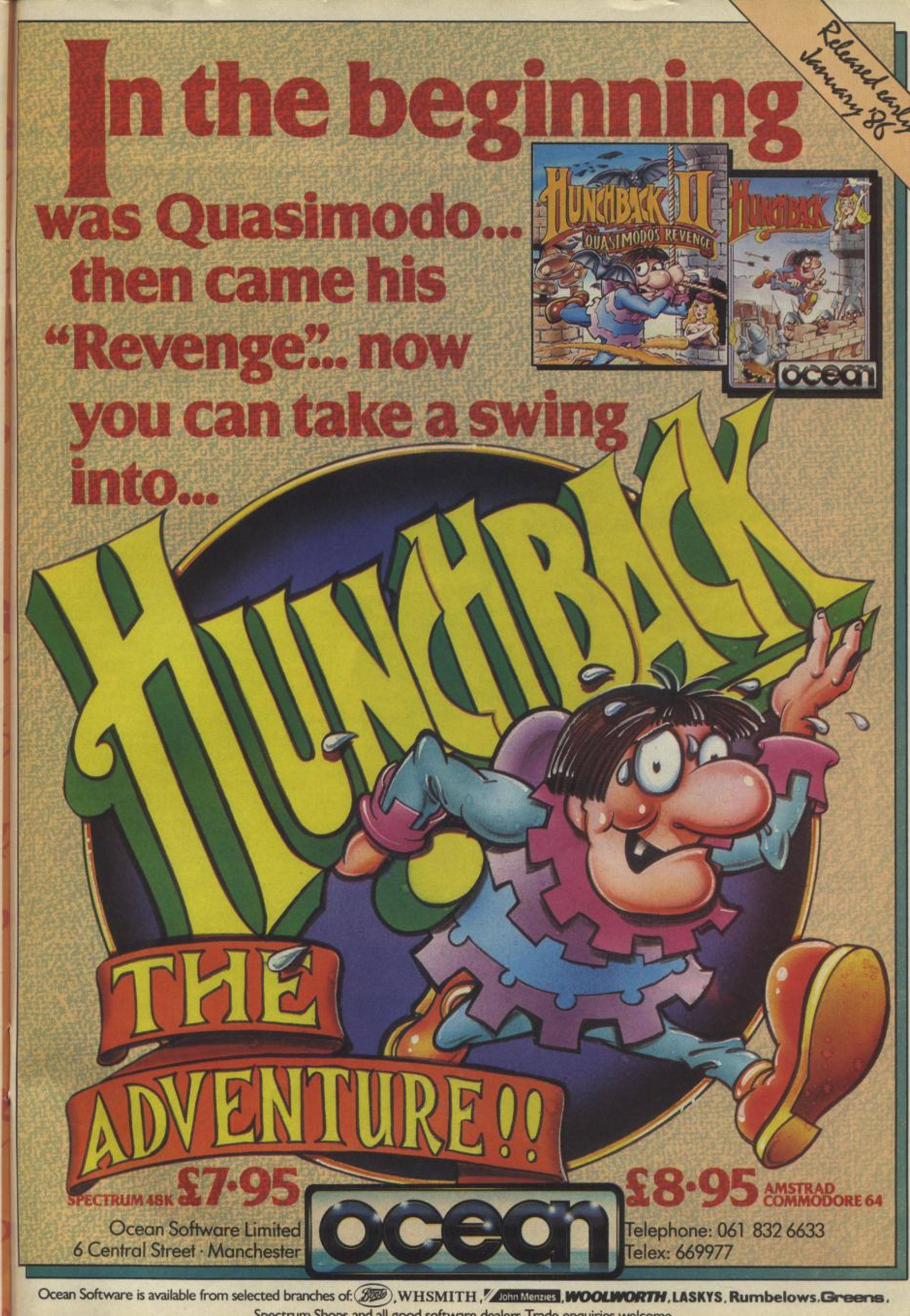
● *''Brilliant' sums up my opinion of* Arc of Yesod. *The graphics, as in* Nodes, *are great with loads of detail and no spared colour. Sound is a little on the meagre side, maybe, but the intro music is a real ear-opener, especially when amplified. In look it's very similar to its predecessor — Charlie hasn't aged a bit — and the game is both playable and addictive. I missed Brookside to play it, a real sacrifice! The packaging is very good and the blurb summarises Charlie's experiences in* Nodes *rather well. It just goes to prove that follow-ups aren't always worse than the originals, as has happened in some cases recently.'*

● 'I think I must have overplayed *Nodes of Yesod* because I'm not very impressed with this one. Graphically, this game has the same sort of backgrounds and characters as *Nodes*. Your man is the same fellow as in *Nodes*, although his little companion has changed. All the graphics are large, well drawn and well animated and there is very little colour clash. The sound is a pleasure — a lovely three channel simulation in the tune with the title screen and a few burps and beeps during the game itself. Gameplay is exactly the same as in *Nodes*, so it can't be called original. If, like me, you've got *Nodes* and have become bored to death with it, I wouldn't bother with this one. If, on the other hand, you are *Node*less I strongly recommend *Arc* as you'd find it very playable and addictive.'

COMMENTS

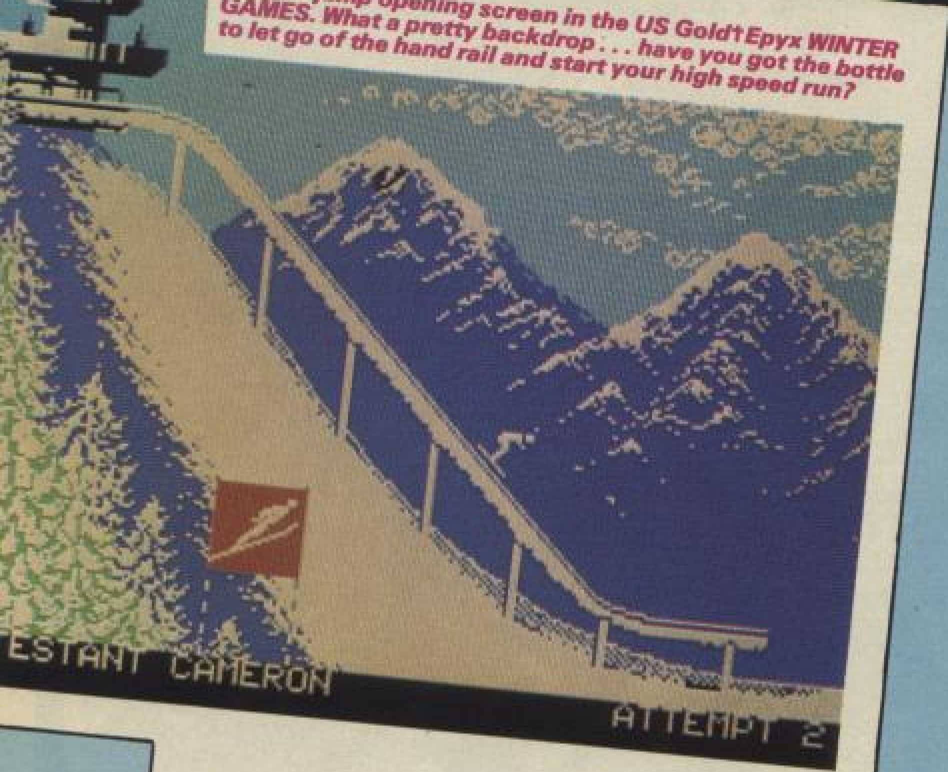
Control keys: 1-0 to change control between the Sphere and Charlie, alternate keys on bottom row for left/right, Q-P Sphere up or Jump for Charlie, A-L Sphere down or drop Smart Bomb, ENTER to pause game
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor and Interface II
Keyboard play: fast, responsive and accurate
Use of colour: cleverly conceived colour scheme avoids colour clash
Graphics: pretty backdrops coupled with excellent animation creates a pleasing effect
Sound: great, but muted — title tune, but not many game effects
Skill levels: 1
Screens:
General rating: A great little game, very much the follow on to *Nodes of Yesod* — maybe too similar.

Use of computer	91%
Graphics	93%
Playability	92%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	86%
Overall	89%

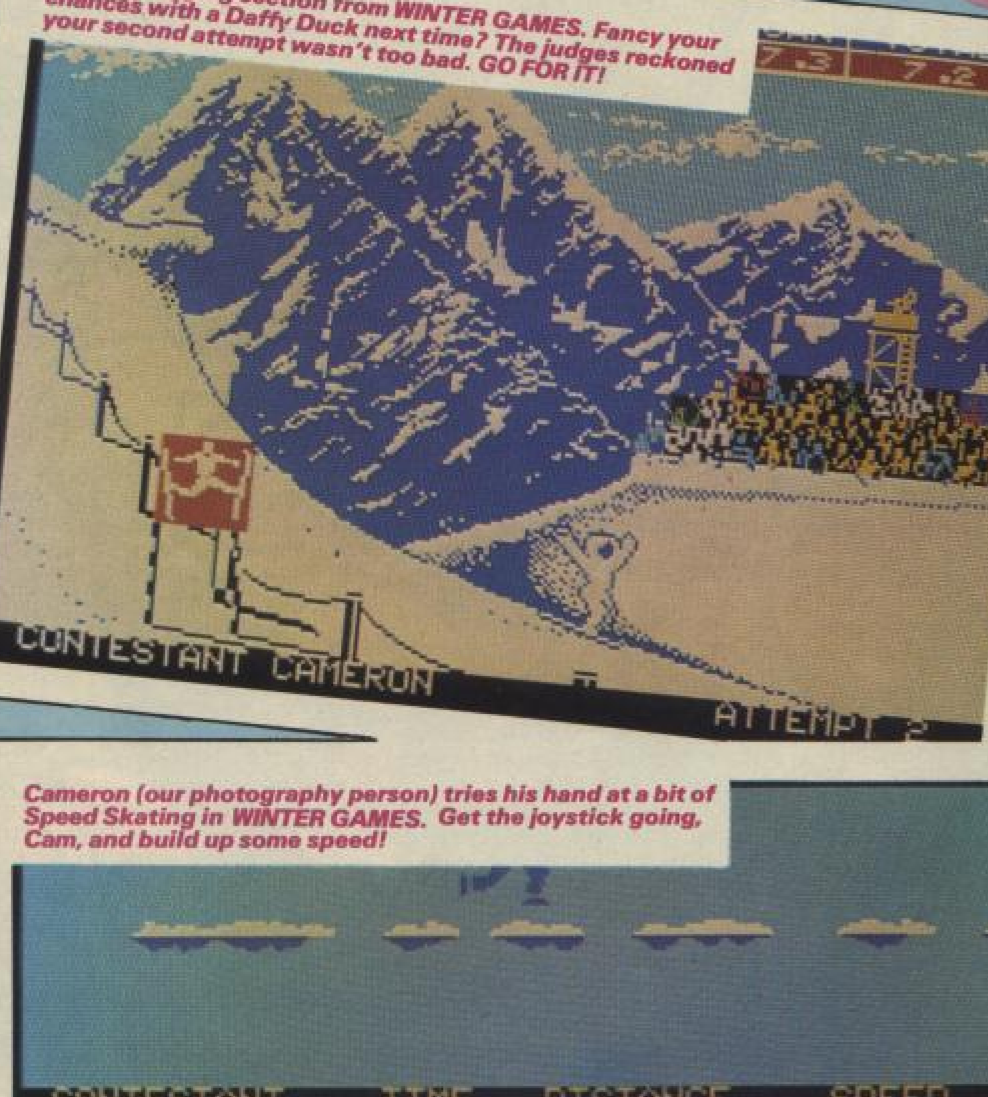


In the beginning was Quasimodo... then came his "Revenge"... now you can take a swing into...
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W·I·N·T·E·R



The ski-jump opening screen in the US Gold/Epyx WINTER GAMES. What a pretty backdrop . . . have you got the bottle to let go of the hand rail and start your high speed run?



The hotdogging section from WINTER GAMES. Fancy your chances with a Daffy Duck next time? The judges reckoned your second attempt wasn't too bad. GO FOR IT!



Cameron (our photography person) tries his hand at a bit of Speed Skating in WINTER GAMES. Get the joystick going, Cam, and build up some speed!

Wrap up in your bright red skiing gear, don your skates and go out on the piste courtesy of *Winter Games*. Yupsirree sporting fans, the latest Epyx/US Gold sports simulation prematurely brings to your Spectrum's screen seven of the events which will feature in the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada.

The events fall into three categories: skating events, figure, free and speed; skiing, hot dogging, the jump and biathalon; and finally sledding — bobsled. All these events won't fit into memory together, and two loads are required. The package includes a double-sided cassette with three events on one side and four on the other. Each side can be loaded independently.

Once a side has loaded an extensive options screen is presented. Using this, you can change the game controls, see the world records and choose the number of players participating — up to four people can compete together. Events can be practised, and it's possible to compete in single events or run through all the events loaded from one side. When the game has been set up to your satisfaction you're asked to input your name and play begins.

SIDE ONE

Ski Jumping, Hot Dog Aerials and Speed Skating

Speed Skating involves a 30 mph dash over a smooth glassy surface. The screen is split horizontally, each half showing two skating lanes and competitors race against a computer-controlled pacer on their half of the screen. The idea is to whizz off as fast as you can once the starting signal sounds, in an attempt to get to the finishing post first.

To control your skater, all you have to do press left and right rhythmically in time with your skater's legs, quickly at the beginning to build up speed, then slowly and smoothly to keep the speed up once it has been attained. A bar display on the right of the lanes gives a speed readout. Naturally, the player with the fastest time wins the race.

The Ski Jump sees you at the top of a long runway, and the ground looks far, far away. Pressing fire starts the journey down the slope, and another press at the end of the runway makes your skier leap into space — mistime this, and the skier takes a tumble. If the jump timed right, then the screen changes, revealing the skier's flightpath



Producer: Epyx/US Gold
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Sentient Software/US Gold**

A CRASH Smash

as he falls towards the landing slope and stopping area. In the upper right hand corner of this screen a little window shows the skier's posture in the air. To make a good jump, you need to watch this window, correcting the skier's faults in mid-air. Up unbends the skier's knees, down stops the skis from crossing and left and right is used to adjust the angle of forward and backward lean. If corrections aren't made then presentation points are lost, the skier doesn't travel so far and a crash landing is likely, and more points are lost.

The distance jumped is multiplied by three and added to the presentation marks to give an overall score. Each player has three attempts to notch up a good score before the winner of the event is announced.

Hot Dog Aerials is the third event on Side One. In this crazy event a skier has to whizz down a short runway, take off and perform as many stunts, somersaults and kicks as possible before landing safely. Like the Ski Jumping, the skier is activated by a press of the fire button. Once in the air, six directional controls select the stunts that can be performed. Since the jump is a short one there's only time for two stunts — any more and the hotdogger is likely to land head-first! Points are awarded for the difficulty of the stunts performed: the more complex the routine, the higher the points. Once again, you get three attempts but, in this skiing event, a panel of international judges award points, which are then averaged.

CRITICISM

" Seven events in only two loads for only eight quid can't be bad. I wasn't impressed with the menu and medal screens, but the game itself is very good with beautiful backgrounds on most of the outdoor events. Side One is the best graphically, with sound on the events too, but Side Two features four events — it's hard to decide which side to play. All the events require a fair amount of practice, some more than others — the skating and ski-jumping, for instance, need a lot of accurate joystick or keyboard control and split-second timing. Every event is of very high quality, and just when you think you've gone as far as you can, you find some other special move. With the snow gently descending in Ludlow, I'm glad I can get some skating practice in! "

CRITICISM

" I reckon this must be the best sports game to date, with the possible exception of Hyper Sports**. Seven excellently portrayed events make for great fun, and because of the constantly appealling challenge about beating the record, or trying a different event, this is a highly addictive piece of software. Some of the events take some getting into, others are instantly playable but the difficulty still remains. The instructions are very long and helpful, telling you everything about each event, and detailing a history of the Winter Games as well. Epyx seem to have succeeded where Electric Dreams failed with their** Winter Sports**. I think the name similarity could confuse, which would be very unfortunate. I now live in hope of seeing a Spectrum version of** Summer Games **(I and II). Over to you US Gold/Epyx. "**

SIDE TWO

Figure Skating, Free Skating, Bobsled and The Biathalon

The two skating events are very similar indeed and have identical control methods and graphics — in Figure Skating seven compulsory moves have to be made whilst in Free Skating it's up to you to choreograph your own performance.

The Figure Skating event lasts for one minute, and skating against the timer, you have to complete a program of seven movements. Your skater is shown in the centre of the screen with the crowd scrolling past in the background. A timer ticks down during your performance.

Figure skaters are capable of eight different moves, including skating forwards. Practice and experimentation is needed before you become proficient at these events. Learning which move can successfully follow on from another without risk of your skater taking a tumble is vital. When a minute is up your skater takes a bow and a score is given. Points are awarded for successful movements — awkward movements and falls cost points.

Free Skating looks and plays identically to the figure skating, only there is a time limit of two minutes. In this event the overall object is to make three successful attempts at the seven moves. Once again, points are won for each movement completed and lost for mistakes and falls. The highest possible score is a six, no matter what your overall score.

The Biathalon is the most strength sapping of all the events . . . with a .22 calibre rifle over your shoulder you have to endure ice and snow as you race against the clock over scenic landscapes pausing for a spot of target shooting on the way. The course consists of several flip screens showing slopes, flat stretches and the four target boards. Each target screen contains five targets and a sight moves vertically over each one in turn. Your athlete's pulse rate, monitored by a flashing heart on the bottom right of the screen, affects the steadiness of your aim. You get one shot at each target — aim carefully as a miss adds a five second penalty to the overall time for the event.

Fluent left/right movements on the joystick or keys moves the biathlete across the snow on the level and uphill stretches. If you go too fast he slips; go too slowly and it takes ages to build up a good speed. Digging your ski sticks into the snow adds speed on the downhill slopes. At the end of the course your overall time, less penalties, is displayed.

The final event on Side Two puts you in the driving seat of a bobsled. In order to retain control of the sled you have to steer left and right in the bends. The screen is divided into three, with biggest area taken up by an aerial plan of the course. Once you start racing a red line creeps down the course showing your progress, helping you to anticipate bends. The second screen area gives a 3D view of the track as you belt down it, and is the most important screen since it allows gauge whether the bob is being oversteered or understeered. If you don't steer the sled properly then it tumbles over. The third screen is the timer which you race against . . . and as in real life fractions of a second count.

After every event Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are given and points awarded accordingly to the medal winners. After all the events have been played on one side, the player with the highest points is acclaimed the champion of the games.

CRITICISM

" The cover looks great and the games inside are mega-great. All these highly dangerous winter sports can now be played in the comfort of your own home without the risk of breaking bones! The seven different events kept me glued to the keyboard for hours on end. The graphics are lovely throughout, with beautiful lodges and scenery — David Thorpe (See ON THE COVER, Issue 17) has done a great job. Some of the games are really fast — you need to be really quick with your reflexes. All in all, a great package. "

Winter Games also has a World Record facility. If you get a record during a game then it'll automatically be included in the record tables which can be viewed using the option screen. Unfortunately the table can't be saved, but at least you can note down your best efforts, or throw down a challenge to your chums. Don't be too disappointed if you can't find the Opening Ceremony mentioned in the large instruction sheet — the programmer's couldn't quite fit it in, and an Errata slip should come in the package apologising for this omission.

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: nice and easy
Use of colour: good
Graphics: very good, especially some of the backdrops
Sound: some good tunes
Skill levels: one, improve your scores!
Screens: one for each event, two for the Ski Jump, and a course made up from three flip screens for the Biathalon
General rating: An entertaining and challenging sports simulation — one of the best on the Spectrum

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	93%
Playability	92%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	90%
Overall	93%

BENNY HILL'S MADCAP CHASE

Producer: Dk'tronics
Retail price: **£6.95**
Author: **Don Priestley**

In the game inspired by the TV series, Benny Hill has decided to volunteer to help his neighbours do some chores. Benny's friends aren't there to explain what he's up to and passers-by tend to assume he's a thief trying to make away with other people's property. Well meaning folks noticing Mr Hill dashing around with chattels do their best to catch him. You control Benny and it up to you to finish the three different chores he has to complete, each within a time limit.

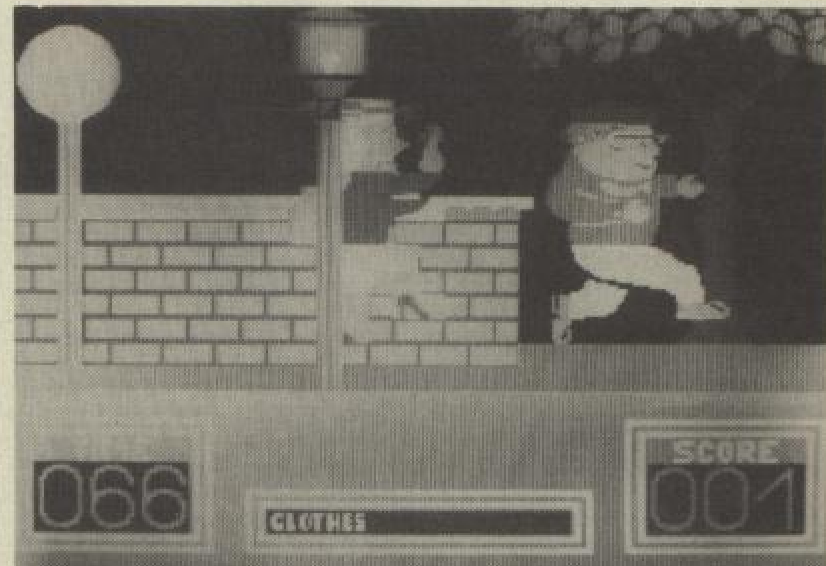
The display format is similar to that used in Don Priestley's earlier game for Dk'tronics, *Popeye*. The characters on the screen are large and most of the shapes for the background and foreground are squareish and conveniently placed on character boundaries to avoid colour clash. Benny can move left and right across flip screens which are presented in a pseudo 3D: the player sees a side-on view of Benny and his surroundings. Each screen has three horizontal 'levels', one behind the other, and Benny can hop between these levels, 'into' or 'out of' the screen.

The objects in Benny's world are rather like flats on a stage — each one sits on one of the three levels to the screen. If Benny is travelling along the screen in line with an obstacle, he must hop to another screen level to avoid bumping into the obstruction. Collisions cause Benny to fall to the floor and he loses time. Just to make life more tricky, the street signs and lamposts on certain screens have a habit of shifting between screen levels while Benny is somewhere else. His pursuers can also be encouraged to bump into things, with a bit of nifty footwork, in which case they stagger around for a while seeing stars while birds twitter!

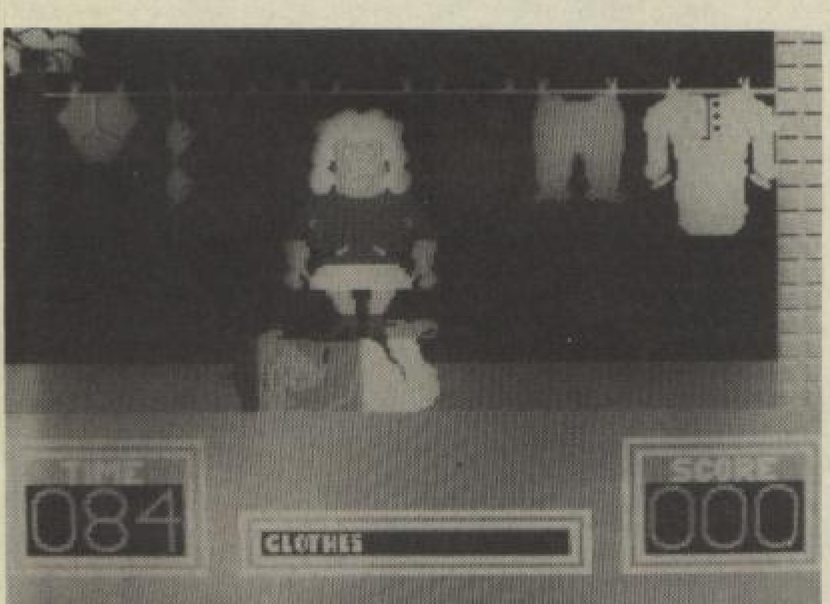
To complete each of his three chores, Benny has to collect objects from the fifth screen and take them to the first screen, running a gauntlet of ever-shifting hazards on the way. People also chase him, and if he is caught the object he has in his possession is returned to its start point and he gets a stomping from the irate member of the public.

Twenty points are added to the score displayed at the bottom right hand side of the screen for each item safely deposited on the first screen. Points are lost for each stomping Benny endures and for collisions with the scenery. Gathering up all the objects and delivering them within the time limit, shown by a counter which ticks down relentlessly, earns bonus points: the time remaining is added to the score and Benny moves on to the next job.

Benny's first chore is to gather in the washing for Mrs Harras, taking it from the clothesline to the laundry basket. A woman, looking remarkably like Bob Todd in a skirt, chases Benny as soon as he's collected a piece of clothing. When she's on the warpath an arrow in the status screen flashes a warning message: "Watch Out!". The second part of the game sees Benny gathering apples for Mr Bramley while being hassled by a farmhand and a tractor, and the third task involves collecting jumble for Mrs Bargin and avoiding a couple of over zealous Bobbies.



Legging it down the road with a cross housewife in pursuit, that's BENNY HILL's MADCAP CHASE for you



Benny hits the dust and gets jumped on for his pains by an annoyed lady in BENNY HILL's MADCAP CHASE

CRITICISM

● **" This is a strange little game, but it is very playable and addictive. Graphically,** Madcap Chase **is excellent, each character is large, well animated and has many facial expressions. As with its 'parent',** Popeye **there are very few attribute problems. Sound is well used although I did notice the lack of a tune on the title screen. There's a little more to this game than just running back and forth from one end of the playing area to the other, as the scenery — telephone boxes, trees, lamp posts and the like — changes position when you pick up or drop an object. At first I really enjoyed playing this one but it gets very monotonous after a short time. "**

● *" Quite a good game, with neatly drawn big, bulky sprites which are very easy to identify. More sound would have helped. The game is set in a street, with lots of objects lying around. I loved it when Benny hit something or the lady chasing him had a fit. Once you get into the game it becomes more and more interesting and fun to play. It is so playable that it's easy to get hooked. A good game, well worth getting. "*

● " *Benny Hill's Madcap Chase* uses the same colour masking routines as *Popeye*, but the effect produced is not nearly so good. The screen contains a lot of colour, but also a lot of clashes and blocky characters. Dk'Tronics seem to have got a faster game in *Benny Hill*, but not as much thought has gone into presenting the whole screen, and the gameplay is a bit unresponsive. When I first played this game I was quite pleased with some nice touches — like the woman jumping onto Benny, and the way he leaps about, but after playing the screens right through (very easy) there was no lasting effect on me and I didn't want to have another go. The first two levels were easy, but the last one was much too hard. Joystick play was impossible, as I kept hitting the fire button which resets the game. Good first impressions, but no lasting appeal for me! "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2, Dk'tronics (!)
Keyboard play: reasonably responsive
Use of colour: cleverly thought out
Graphics: large, and different
Sound: blips and thumps
Skill levels: one
Screens: fifteen
General rating:

Use of computer	71%
Graphics	84%
Playability	83%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	69%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**78%**

COSMIC WARTOAD

Producer: Ocean
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Denton Designs (from an idea by Simon Butler)**

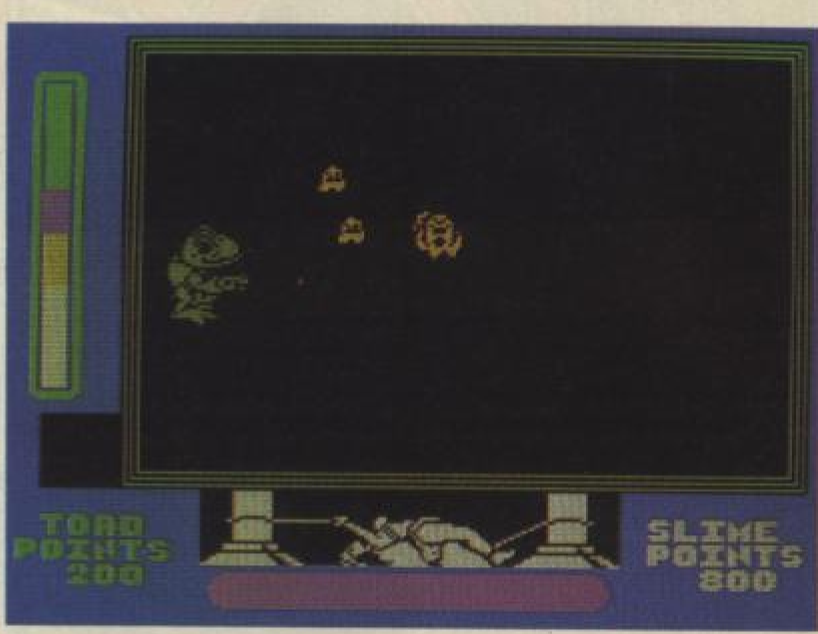
Deep within the bowels of the Castle Rygellian, far below the Holy Torture Chambers, is the Slime Beast's Department of Abduction and Foreign Queen Abusement. Here lies the Queen of the Cosmic Wartoads, the leader of a brave and truly cosmic race of honest and goodsome toads dedicated only to truth, justice, mom's fly pie and the toadican way of life. Kid napped by the Rygellian Slime beasts, she has been transmuted to the ghastly (to Wartoads) form of a human female.

Understandably, the Wartoads are incredibly narked by their brave leader's demise, so a crack toad is sent off on a rescue mission. Time is not limitless, since the queen is tied beneath a murderous **SLUDGE SAW** that descends slowly but surely towards her helpless form. It has fallen upon you to rescue your queen, since you are the the bravest of the cosmic wartoads — a Toad among toads.

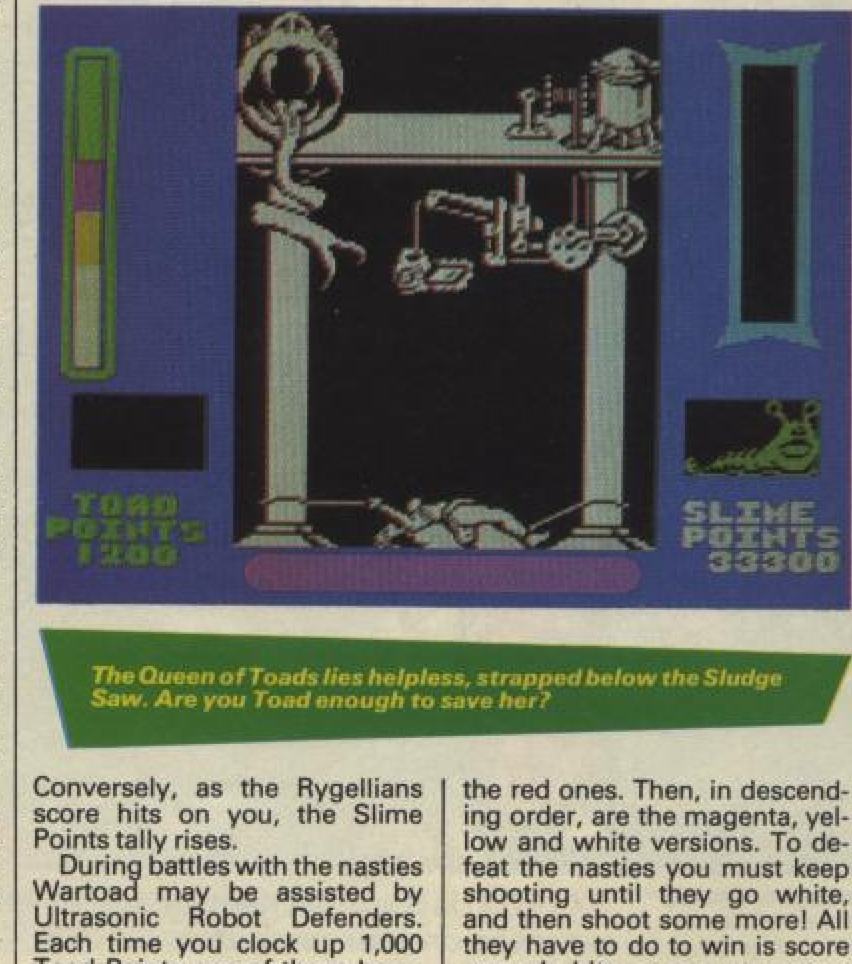
The path to the Slime King's lair is not a mere hop across the lily pad: you have to cross the perilous **RYGELLIAN TIMEVOID**. In the void are the eight pieces of the **COSMIC TOOLKIT**, a menacing compilation of deadly machinery capable of dismantling the sludge saw if you get to your Queen in time. The kit is most awesome and contains a assortment of amazing goodies including an Intergalatic Whisk, a Chronosynclastic Stanley Knife, a pair of X Ray binoculars, a Stellar Fish, a Death Ray Smutt Gun, a 3 Million Megawatt Lightbulb, a Cosmic Axe and a Zippo Lighter.

Whilst in the time void you take the form of Cosmic Willy, a tadpole creature that acts as a cursor. Each square within the eight by eight grid which comprises the timevoid is a time node. Your journey starts in the top right cell of the void and the idea is to reach the Queen at bottom left. You can only move to adjacent nodes in the grid — it's no good trying to make a mega leap straight for the Queen's location.

Each node has to be travelled through before you may use Cosmic Willy to transport you to the next. To get through a node all the nasties that live in the time vacuums that lie behind the node must be killed with your Constant Recoil Alpha Pellet gun. A node may contain up to four time vacuums, each one full of nasties which have to be defeated before you can re-enter the time grid and move to another node. There are three different types of nasty to be found within time vacuums, with each vacuum containing just one variety. You get to pit wits with Slime Masters, Sludge Slugs and Frenzied Flies during your travels and when you enter a node a window opens on the screen and you enter a subgame in which you do battle. As you inflict damage on the nasties, your Toad Points increase.



Cosmic does battle with the Slime Master and his yukky minions in a subgame which windows out of the Saw Screen. Good job he's got his trusty Constant Recoil Alpha-Pellet Gun



The Queen of Toads lies helpless, strapped below the Sludge Saw. Are you Toad enough to save her?

Conversely, as the Rygellians score hits on you, the Slime Points tally rises.

During battles with the nasties Wartoad may be assisted by Ultrasonic Robot Defenders. Each time you clock up 1,000 Toad Points one of these beasties appears in the playing area automatically and can delay some of your enemies by seizing hold of them for a while — how long a while depends on the difference between Toad points and Slime points. Toad must stand still to shoot, and he can only fire forwards, so you must move him to the appropriate location before blasting away.

Status displays on the border of each game screen indicate how the battle is progressing, and the nasties themselves change colour to let you know how close to winning you are. The most powerful nasties are the red ones. Then, in descending order, are the magenta, yellow and white versions. To defeat the nasties you must keep shooting until they go white, and then shoot some more! All they have to do to win is score enough hits on you to move them up a colour whereupon you lose a life and have to start that node again. Toad has three lives — when he loses all three he is reincarnated at the top right node and effectively restarts his journey. Meanwhile the Sludge Saw has got even closer to the Queen . . .

The Slime Master homes in on you and his touch is deadly. Escorted by his fawning minions, the Slime Pawns, the Slime Master himself is loathe to attack a Cosmic Wartoad preferring to send his cohorts on the attack. Wartoad can move within the playing area in the four

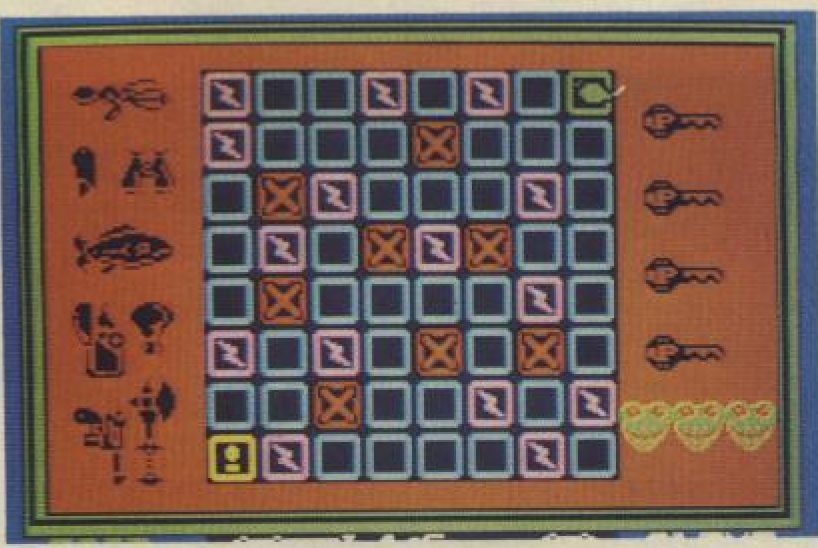




basic directions, followed round by the nasties. Each time you despatch a cohort or score a hit on old SM himself, you get closer to victory.

Sludge Slugs come mob-handed and cling to the top of the playing area, out of range, dribbling slime at you. Every so often a slug (or two) lets go and falls to the floor. You've got to zap the slugs as they fall and avoid being slimed or hit by a falling invertebrate. In this sub-game Toad can only scamper left and right but he can protect himself from falling slime and slugs by shooting them.

Frenzied Flies appear in a swarm, bunched together in the top left hand corner of a time vacuum. Attack squadrons of four insects leave the main mass and go for Toad, who must blow them away before they drain his energy. Once again, he can move in four directions.



The Time Void window, where Cosmic Willy acts as your cursor. On the left are the slots for items of the Cosmic Toolkit and on the right are the spaces for the keys to the Roads to Nowhere and Somewhere. The black silhouettes are coloured in once Cosmic has collected the artefacts they represent

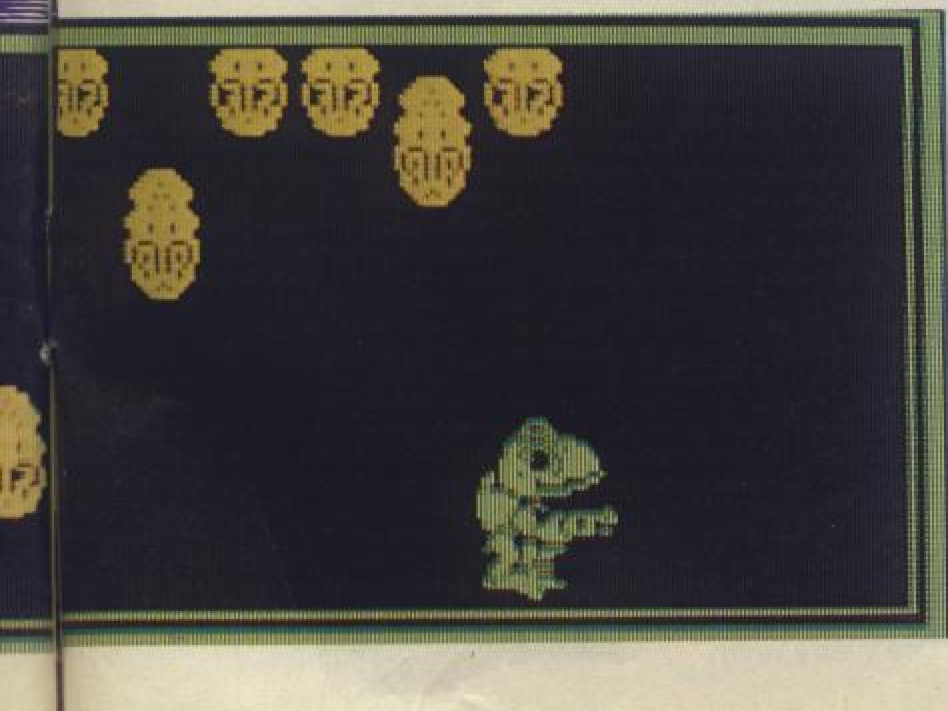


Parts of the Cosmic Toolkit can be found in time vacuums— all Toad has to do is walk over them and add them to his collection. Keys which give you access to the Roads to Nowhere and Somewhen can also be collected in a similar manner. These roads provide a means of hopping from one time vacuum to another (and hence travelling between nodes which are not adjacent). Four pairs of nodes are linked together by the roads, and they appear as red squares on the timegrid at the start of the game. When you collect a key, one of the pairs of linked nodes unlocks and changes to white on the grid and you can 'jump' between them.

Other squares within the void are also colour coded. Green shows the node currently occupied while purple means that a power node sits at the end of that node's time vacuums. Once the nasties lurking the the va cuums behind a purple node have been eliminated, Wartoad will automatically be transported to the **LILY POWER WINDOW** where the Constant Recoil Alpha Pellet gun may be recharged. A bar at the bottom of the screen show the gun charge remaining— if it reaches zero three lives are lost, and it's back to the start node, toad.

After completing a node, a scene showing the queen held mercilessly below the sludge saw appears with the saw moving just that bit closer. The sludge saw takes an hour and a half of real time to complete its descent, during which time you need to collect the Toolkit and arrive in the node where the Queen is held captive. Failure spells death for the Wartoad Queen and a 'Nice legs, shame about the face' message reveals itself. So, there it is. Are you Toad enough to take the challenge?

Cosmic's in the Sludge Slug subgame window, and three of the slimy beasties are falling . . .



CRITICISM

● **'After** Frankie **this has to be Denton's best to date. Though markedly a Denton product, with windows, icons and other such paraphenalia, it wasn't actually their design. The game itself is very neat indeed and though many of the sub-games are quite mindless they're great fun. The scenario and instructions on the accompanying inlay provide nearly as much entertainment as the game itself. Whoever was responsible for these certainly has a slightly unstable sense of humour. Graphically** Cosmic Wartoad **is very nice, and the main sprite is cleverly animated, though a little colourless. The windowing system works very well and isn't as obtrusive as Denton's previous attempts.** Cosmic Wartoad **is a very good release indeed and is well above the usual Ocean standard. Denton fans will love it but it's appeal should spread to many other gamesters.'**

● *'Yet another game by Denton Designs and boy is it good! The only way of describing the game is by comparing it to* Frankie *— if you can imagine a load of totally original sub games all combined to make one game then that's the nearest you'll get to* Cosmic Wartoad. *The graphics are generally big, colourful and very detailed, as you would expect of Denton. There is very little sound besides a sort of tune on the options screen. This is one of those games which proves quite difficult to start off with but if you persevere with it then it doesn't take long before you're hooked. My only real gripe with the game is that the instructions are not that good. One of Denton's best!'*

● 'There's an awful lot of instructions to this game and the scenario is well complicated. It took me a while to read and digest the inlay and I still had to play for about half an hour before I fully understood what was going on. Maybe I'm a bit dim . . . Once you get to grips with this game, however, it's really neat — and frustrating. I can see it's going to be a while before I crack the problem and rescue the Queen. Essentially there are three arcade sequences, each of which is a compelling game in its own right, and there's an overall strategic element to the game. The graphics are good, especially the animation of the Cosmic Wartoad himself — if you don't move he just sits there and blinks at you. Lots of nice touches add up to a compelling game.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: defined at start of game
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Protek, AGF, Fuller
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: bright and cheerful, avoiding clash
Graphics: large detailed Toad sprite, some excellent animation
Sound: minimal, odd noises for shots and screen changes
Skill levels: one
Screens: three sub-games, plus time grid and Queen Screen
General rating: A good game, which can be a bit tricky to get into. Worth the effort.

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	91%
Playability	84%
Getting started	85%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	89%
Overall	88%

T·H·R·E·E W·E·E·K·S I·N P·A·R·A·D·I·S·E

A CRASH Smash

Another issue of the magazine, and another Wally game to review. This time the title of the game has to rate as Mikro-Gen's worst pun yet. The game features three of the Week family on a tropical island so the title is *Three Weeks in Paradise* (gedditt?).

CRITICISM

" Wally's back again in style this time. With his hanky on his head, he tries to liberate Wilma and Herbert from the evil clutches of the natives. I loved this game. It was so playable and once you thought you had it made, another world was opened up to you. (Try jumping into a seaside scene). The graphics are very good and nicely animated and the sound is good. This would keep me happy for many a wintry night! "

The main character in the game is the ubiquitous Wally Week and he's got the responsibility of rescuing Wilma and Herbert from the Can Nibbles tribe. The Can Nibbles are a nice bunch except for their predelic-tion for human flesh, Wilma and Herbert are on the menu. As with most Wally games the idea is to collect a number of objects and get Wally to use them in a cunning way to achieve his aims. As might be expected, Wilma and Herbert are both well guarded: Wilma is trussed upside down, hanging from a tree and guarded by a witch doctor, while young Herbert is sitting in cooking pot with two ferocious lions standing either side.

The controls are of a standard Wallyesque type with Mr Week being able to jump and move left or right. The A key is an interesting addition — its function changes depending on your location and inventory. The first use likely to be made of A is as an IN key. On some screens there are other ways of moving onto another screen, apart from the IN key. Some of the alternative exits are quite obvious or are labelled, others are a bit more obscure. The IN key is likely to cause big headaches to most map makers.

Wally is able to carry two objects at once with the items shown on a small window at the lower left hand corner of the screen with the keys 1 and 2 used for dropping or picking up the objects. Once picked up and inside a window, a small text description appears in case you can't quite recognise Mikro-Gen's visual interpretation of some objects. Also along the bottom half of the screen is a life counter, where each of the four lives is shown as a skull and crossbones. Next to lives are a couple of skeletons, having no apparent use at all — the only thing they do is tap their feet after long periods of Wally inactivity.

As ever with Mikro-Gen, the solutions to the problems in the game are of a devious but logical nature. On the beach it seems impossible to cross without losing a life because of the quicksand. However a pair of flip flops should help your dilemma, as once they are wrapped around Wally's feet the quicksand can safely be traversed. Most of the problems follow this sort of format.

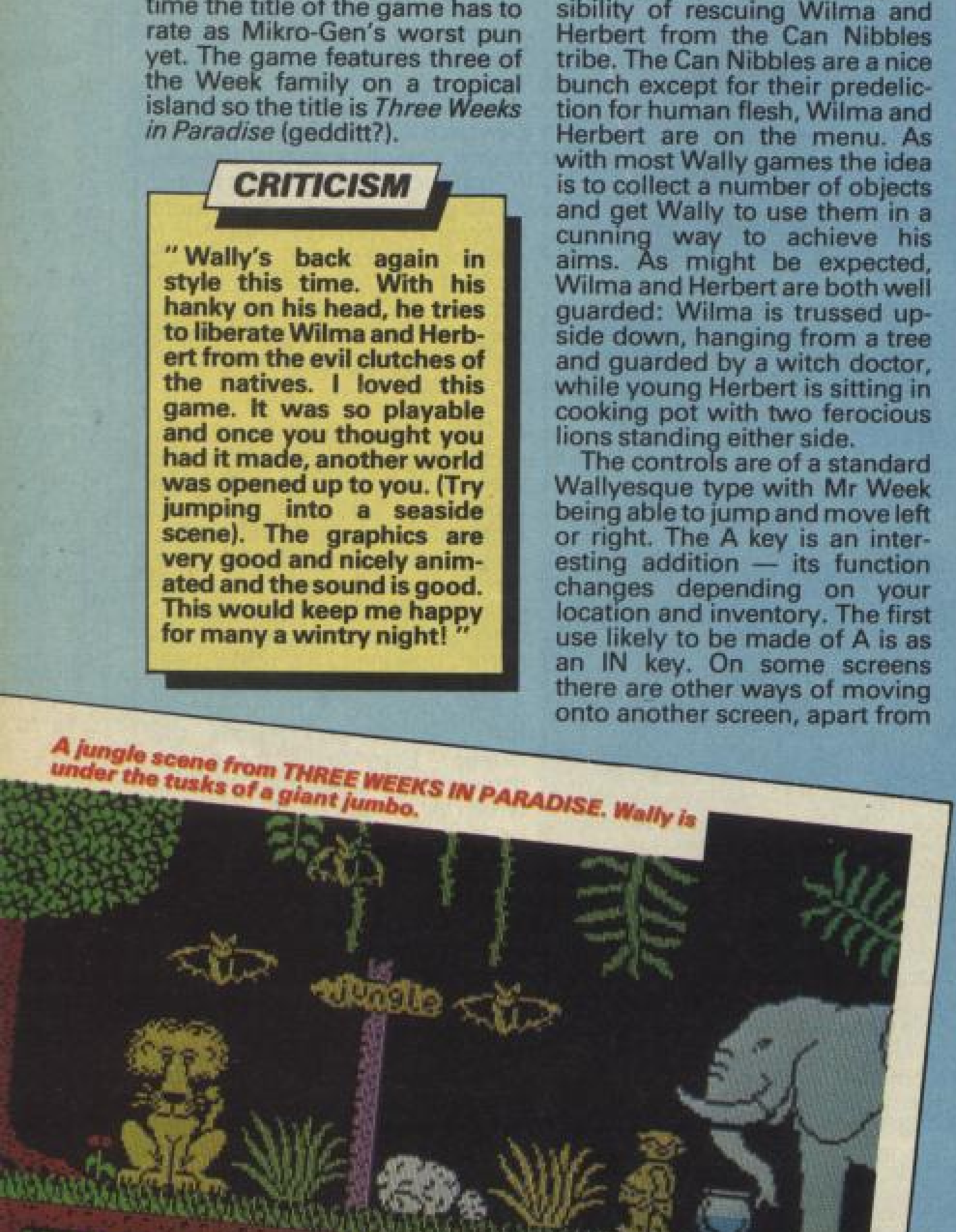
You are not up against the clock in this game, despite the cannibal's hunger the only danger is from a variety of nasties flitting about on different screens. There are bats, lions and even snails to dodge. Also there's no energy bar, bump into a baddie and you'll lose a life. After all the lives are lost, the usual Mikro-Gen analysis of performance is presented, together with a percentage of the game completed score.

CRITICISM

" Five Wally games must be pushing it, I thought, as another superlative loading screen materialised — I started on the game, all ready not to give it a good review. No. The game is good, very good indeed. The graphics are very 'Wallyish' and I loved them. A really nice tune plays as you scamper around the tropical locations. The packaging is colourful and neat and the instructions, while short, tell you all you need to know. The problems set in the game are PROBLEMS. My overall impression was that this is a professional package, containing another very professional game. Just don't do what I nearly did: dislike it because of the star. "

CRITICISM

" Mikro-Gen's last release was a bit of a disappointment. Three Weeks in Paradise **is the logical follow on to** Everyone's a Wally. **The graphics are excellent, just like the previous Wally games. This time the puzzles seem a bit more devious but I'm sure you brainy lot will have them worked out in no time whatsoever. In this game Mikro-Gen have included some nice features like the music on/off key and the colour on/off key which determines whether Wally merges with the background or not. All in all, this is another excellent Wally game which should appeal to most of you. "**



A jungle scene from THREE WEEKS IN PARADISE. Wally is under the tusks of a giant jumbo.



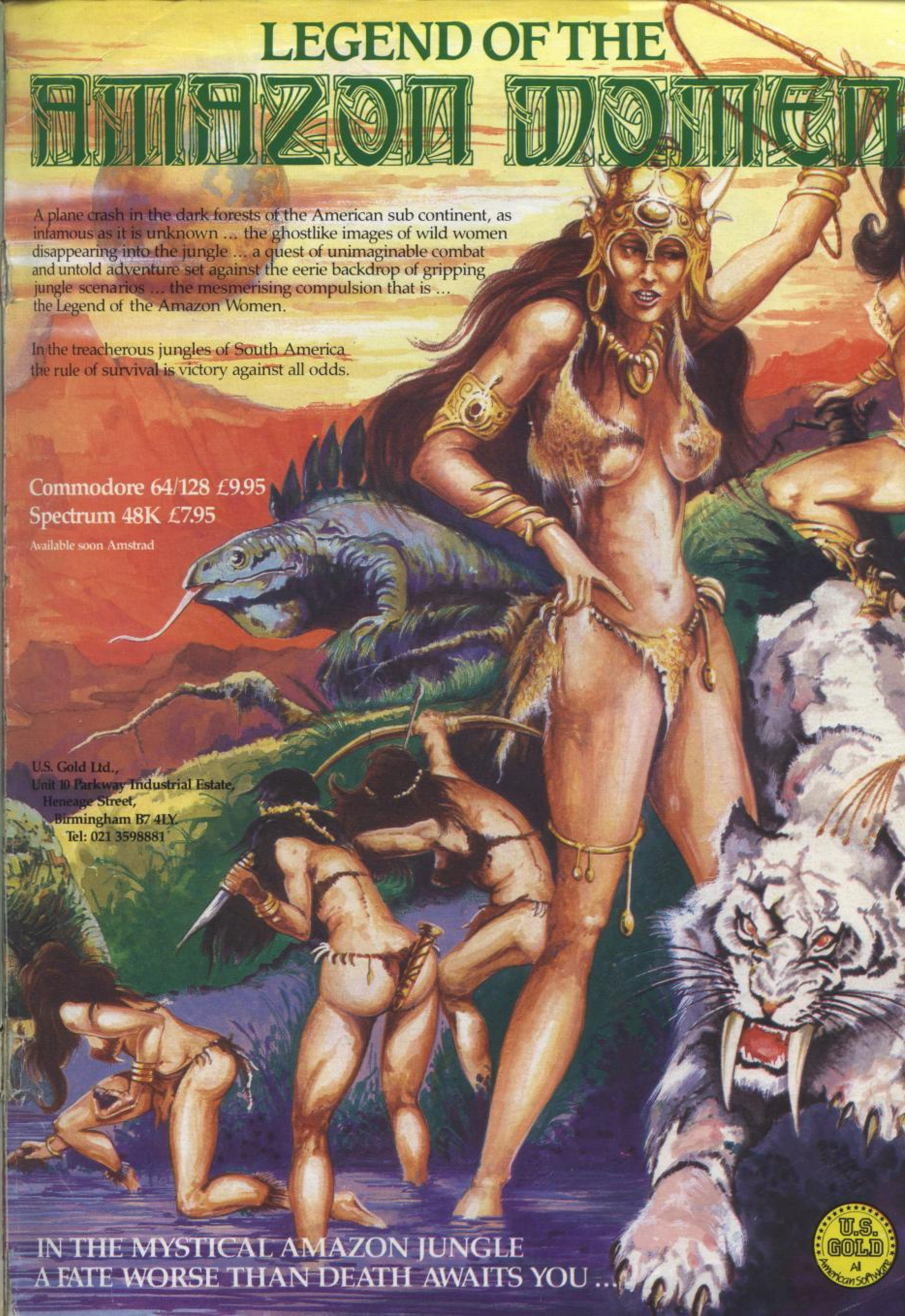
Passing along a jungle track, Wally has to avoid the giant flies

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, A in, 1/2 pickup/drop, 5 pause, Q to jump
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: fast and responsive.
Use of colour: ingenious attribute control minimizes clash
Graphics: the sinclair user who produced these pictures really is an ace art fiend and doesn't need any scolding
Sound: excellent spot effects, but annoying tune that can luckily be turned off
Skill levels: one
Screens: 31
General rating: Another game for Wally fans everywhere

Use of computer	92%
Graphics	95%
Playability	91%
Getting started	88%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	91%
Overall	**93%**

Producer: Mikro-Gen
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **The Wally team**


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System Three Software Limited Davis House 29 Hatton Garden EC1N 8DA Tel. 01 831 7403 Telex 896691/H675